



NAVY NEWS

JUNE 2013

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC 70

LONDON CEREMONIES
AND MEMORIAL
SUPPLEMENT

GULF COURSE

MAJOR TEST
FOR MINE
FORCES

CAPITAL SHIPS

Swordfish LS326 of the Royal Navy Historic Flight banks over Wapping to head up the Thames and over HMS Belfast and Edinburgh, berthed next to Tower Bridge. The vintage torpedo bomber was one of five Fleet Air Arm aircraft taking part in a Battle of the Atlantic memorial flypast over the capital. See pages 14-15.

Picture: Lt Cdr Andy Thompson, RNHF





Mine games

WITH a small splash the red and black submarine drops into the Gulf.

Despite the clear green-blue waters, it quickly disappears, trailing a thin orange cable.

A spindle on the deck unwinds furiously as the submersible travels further down and away from the ship.

In the heart of HMS Shoreham PO Martyn Morton moves his fingers over four silver buttons to manoeuvre the submersible – Seafox.

His colleagues crane their necks to look at the black and white video feed. The view is rather like fixing a camera to the front of a rollercoaster car – exhilarating, intoxicating, mesmerising – even though the submarine is moving at just 4kts.

A streak flashes across the screen – an eel – as Seafox flies over the sandy ocean floor, occasionally dotted with a rock or a sea urchin.

And then, out of the murk, eight metres away – you’d never get this visibility in Shoreham’s native Faslane, barely a metre – a long black tube, perhaps three metres long.

Divers to immediate notice. Divers to immediate notice.

A few miles to the south, a diver sits on the edge of a Seahawk helicopter’s cabin, legs dangling over the side, flippers moving back and forth, a couple of hundred metres off RFA Cardigan Bay’s starboard beam.

A few feet away a thin trail of grey smoke from a marker grenade drifts across the surface.

The diver leaps about four metres, disappearing into the swirl caused by the helicopter’s downwash.

After placing a charge on a drift mine, he swims away several hundred metres – well away from the blast radius – and waits for a strop to be lowered so he can return to his helicopter.



MORE than 40 nations accepted the invitation to take part in the largest mine warfare exercise ever staged in the Gulf... as did **Richard Hargreaves. He joined HMS Shoreham, RFA Cardigan Bay and the USS Ponce.**

Divers leaping from helicopters. Robot submarines. Just two ways of dealing with mines demonstrated by the 40 nations who converged in the Gulf for a fortnight in mid-May for the world’s biggest workout of its kind, IMCMEX – International Mine Counter-Measures Exercise.

But mines? They’re a thing of the past, aren’t they? Spiky eggs bobbing up and down on the ocean, or, de-activated, plonked on sea fronts so you could donate 10p to the RNLI.

Well, yes and no. There hasn’t been any concerted attempt to mine the high seas since the first Gulf war more than two decades ago.

But mines are still being produced. And many nations around the world (not the UK) have substantial stocks.

Most recently, pro-Gaddafi forces tried – and failed, thanks to the RN – to prevent humanitarian aid reaching the Libyan port of Misrata in 2011 with makeshift mines.

They strapped explosives to a small boat and sank it on the approaches to the harbour.

And therein lies the rub. “Mines are cheap – a \$10,000 mine can destroy a \$1bn ship,” the American directing IMCMEX from the command ship USS Ponce, Cdre Glenn Allen, says pointedly.

And mines can block sea lanes. Indeed, the *threat* of mines can block sea lanes. And you don’t want the sea lanes in the Middle East blocked: 90 per cent of the UK’s natural gas comes from the Gulf; while 30 per cent of

the world’s sea-borne oil comes through the narrows – up to 17 million barrels a day.

“Suez, Bab al Mandeb, the Strait of Malacca are all equally important,” stresses Cdre Simon Ancona, the senior RN commander east of Suez. “Any blockage has an impact on world trade – and everyone feels that cold breeze.”

Which is why 40 nations, 35 ships, minehunting helicopters, specialist dive teams and robot submarines accepted the invite to IMCMEX, following the inaugural exercise last September.

RN participation was a given: all four of its Gulf-based minehunters – HMS Ramsey, Shoreham, Quorn and Atherstone – plus their mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay and new destroyer HMS Dragon threw their hats into the ring.

There’s been a permanent RN minehunting presence in the Gulf for a decade now. But its counter-mine forces were here in the ’60s. They were here through the tanker wars of the 1980s – an international effort dealt with more than 1,200 mines sown in the Gulf. And they were here in the first Gulf war.

A young Cdre Ancona was involved in the latter, dropping clearance divers from helicopters into the water to deal with the threat.

More than two decades on, in similar waters, mine warfare, he says, “is still a slow, methodical business. We are better than we were then – but so are the mines.”

Those at the business end of modern mine warfare nod their

heads.

Shoreham’s Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Mark Hammon, warns that the 21st Century mine is “very smart” and although a cheap way of warfare, should not be underestimated.

His deputy – and mine clearance diving officer – Lt ‘Castro’ Castrinoyannakis adds: “Makers of mines have grown wise to the fact that sonar and divers are looking for you by adding underwater growth, disguising them as rocks.”

There are two types of mine: contact (you have to hit them) or influence (a ship has to pass over to trigger a reaction, be it from the noise of its propellers, magnetic displacement, pressure).

Both contact and influence mines can be tethered by a chain, hanging below the surface to cause maximum damage. Contact mines can be cut free from their fetters and drift randomly in the ocean; influence mines can sit on the seabed, be disguised as rocks, and in cases can count the number of ships passing overhead before detonating.

The effects of the two mines are different. A contact mine will blow a bloody great hole (technical term) in your ship. An influence mine causes a ‘whiplash effect’ – warping a vessel as happened to the American cruiser USS Princeton in the first Gulf war.

So how do you find them?

Different nations do things differently. The Americans have minehunters, but also use minesweeping helicopters, autonomous underwater vehicles – mini robot submarines – dive teams and divers jumping out of helicopters. Almost every major seafaring nation has specialist teams of mine clearance divers (the Dutch and Japanese, for example, both of whom sent personnel to IMCMEX). In 2013, the RN has plumped for minehunters –

Sandowns and Hunts – and divers.

It’s generally a game of small ships – a few hundred tonnes, crews fewer than 50 – eclipsed by the big boys in their carriers, assault ships, even frigates and destroyers.

It’s not sexy in the *Top Gun* sense. It’s slow. Methodical. It requires attention to detail. A keen eye. It’s not for people who like their whizzes and bangs.

“Mine warfare is often neglected, particularly in large navies,” Cdre Allen says. “But if you want to do naval operations, you must be able to deal with mines.”

So here we are aboard HMS Shoreham. Mid-Gulf. Dealing with mines.

A probe is lowered into the sea to measure temperature and salinity, giving the minehunters an idea of how sound will work and where the thermal layers are.

Unlike their Hunt-class counterparts, the Sandowns have variable depth sonar which can be lowered to ‘look’ through the layers. In short, the Hunts are perfect for hunting mines in shallow waters; Sandowns where it’s deeper.

Whether attached to the hull or dangling on its cable, Sonar 2093 feeds back its findings to an orangey-brown display against a background of snooker table green (it’s as garish as it sounds).

The display provides a ‘satellite’ view of the seabed, alongside a small vertical graph which shows anything rising above the bed.

If it makes things sound easy, if you’re expecting a mine to leap out on the sonar display, you’re wrong.

It is a painstaking business. The ship is edging along at just 2kts, searching an area of around two square miles at a time.

A sonar operator can spend no more than an hour at a time staring at the brown and green





display. After that they're relieved and carry out other duties, such as preparing Seafox for its next mission.

A slightly brighter brown-white line appears on the screen. The vertical readout spikes – but only slightly. The operator zooms in on a definite object.

At this stage we have a possible mine. Or an oil drum tossed over the side. Or a rock.

For closer inspection, it's time to put Seafox in the water.

A couple of metres long, powered by batteries which drive four small propellers it carries a camera, searchlight and, when required, a 1.5kg explosive charge.

Launched from the quarterdeck from a cradle, Seafox is driven from the operations room courtesy of a control panel with a throttle and four buttons to move it around.

For the first leg of its journey, the controller sits back; the mini submarine heads towards its target on a pre-determined course.

The I-Round is sent out first – hopefully courtesy of the camera the ops room team can identify the mine (hence the I in I-Round).

If they decide Seafox is the way to get rid of the device, the C-Round (C for Combat, although the crew refer to it as the Charlie Round) is sent down.

Once dispatched, it will not return – whether or not it destroys the mine; you don't bring back a live weapon to the ship.

The shaped charge it carries destroys not only the mine but also the Seafox itself (£50k a pop). It falls to the operator to flick a little red switch on the ops room console and KABOOM (technical term).

Seafox replaces the older and (much bigger) 'yellow submarine' which dominated the hangars of British minehunters. "The old system was a nightmare to work with," says LS(MW) Chris

Heron. "It was big, it was heavy, it was powered by three huge car batteries which took ages to charge.

"Seafox is easier to use, faster to deploy and turn around for re-use."

Indeed, during intense operations, Seafox may be launched ten times in just 24 hours.

It's a proven system. It was successfully used by the RN off Libya in 2011, but it's not perfect.

"Seafox can only give you so much," Lt Castrinoyannakis says. "Hands and eyes on a contact – even though it's dangerous – makes all the difference."

There are seven pairs of hands and eyes on Shoreham – her team of clearance divers. Four are sent out on her dive boat to inspect – and, if necessary, destroy – a contact, but only one goes in the water.

He'll carry a 4lb explosive charge if it comes to disposing of the contact, and wear the Clearance Diver's Life Support Equipment, kit weighing 72kg – that's about double a Royal Marines' backpack – although neutral buoyancy takes care of the strain in the water.

"It's a clever bit of kit – it's got low acoustic and magnetic signature," explains LD 'Tony' Knowles. It emits no bubbles because it works on a closed system. "It has the same magnetic signature as a paperclip – pretty hard to believe with all the electronics."

But once again technology only goes so far. Human skill and expertise are crucial: a diver needs to approach a mine very carefully – there may be sensors listening or observing any movement.

And, if the visibility is bad, he'll have to identify the device, making mental notes about its length and shape, then return to the surface, and produce a sketch of it.

In the minehunting world, there's a certain swagger about divers, a feeling that they're a little bit special – a bit like you'd notice with aircrew. It's probably because it's the most dangerous aspect of minehunting.

"You're working with explosives," says Lt Castrinoyannakis. "You're dealing with a mine – which is designed to detonate. And you're working at depths of up to 60 metres."

Indeed, diving has its dangers sans mines, chief among them 'the bends'.

The mix of oxygen and helium in the breathing kit helps to minimise the effects, but if a diver surfaces rapidly – he should ascend at a rate of one metre every four seconds, stopping at specific 'waypoints' for five minutes at a time – he'll suffer.

Shoreham carries a two-man decompression chamber to deal with the effects of the bends.

"As a diver, it's nice to know that if something goes wrong, this is there for you – but also that the lads are there for you too," says Tony. "Everybody knows each other's job."

Which is quite an apt description of life aboard Shoreham in general.

It's like the Royal Navy in miniature, everything shrunk down.

Everyone aboard has secondary, tertiary duties. Divers help out in the galley. So too the steward. At a man overboard exercise, you'll find a chef or stoker helping to haul in the ill-starred dummy (Fred has been replaced by the more realistic Ruth).

Male junior rates share a 13-man mess, their female counterparts a three-berth cabin opposite. There's a solitary shower and no 'Hollywood' (ie lengthy) washes allowed – not because the ship can't produce the water, but because there'd be a queue a mile long.

That's a down side to ships of this size. The plus?

"There's a family feeling," says Lt Castrinoyannakis. "You know everyone aboard, you know about their families, which football teams they support. You form bonds for life."

Minewarfare specialist PO Si Oldroyd agrees: "It's a close-knit community. You know almost everyone in the branch and you certainly know everybody aboard. You socialise together. There's definitely a family feeling."

The rotation of minehunting crews also means there's bags of experience in the branch – there are plenty of third and fourth timers out here, like Si – and that you'll be back in the Gulf roughly every 18 months.

With such regularity, are you able to handle the heat? It's impossible to go the Gulf at this time of year and fail to notice it.

"We came out here in December so we've gradually got used to the heat," says Si. "If you come directly out to the Gulf in June or July, it's redders."

WO2 Del Murray, Shoreham's marine engineer officer, adds: "There are times when you have to stop – you know what you can and cannot do. But everyone has been out here in high summer, so they know what to expect."

So what do you have to expect? Well, in mid-May temperatures were already in the 40s Celsius (and almost reached 50°C on one occasion).

Sailors don't like the heat – well, not that sort of heat. Nor does the kit aboard Shoreham.

"In the UK the sea temperature is 9 or 10°C. Out here it's 28 or 29°C. Trying to keep everything cool is the challenge," Del explains.

"Diving equipment in particular is susceptible to heat – its compartment has to be air-conditioned."

LS(MW) Chris Heron adds:

"As soon as you walk out of the air-conditioned areas of the ship at this time of year you are literally drenched in a sweat in an instant. It's an absolute nightmare."

Four air-conditioning plants do their best to keep the 39 souls aboard Shoreham cool, but they struggle in the ship's small galley.

LCH Chris Reynolds and his team produce 120 meals a day (for £2.60 per sailor) – steak nights, as ever, being popular with the crew, but not necessarily in the galley which gets "pretty warm".

Nevertheless, says Chris, "I love my job, love cooking, love being in the galley."

His ship can store provisions for about a fortnight. Thereafter she needs to put into port for fuel and resupplies, or 'raft up' with Cardigan Bay.

For the past 15 months, the amphibious support ship has been acting as command/mother ship for the RN's Bahrain-based minehunters.

And for the duration of IMCMEX the ship was home to US Navy riverine patrol boats making use of her cavernous loading dock, the RN's mine battle staff and Dutch, Belgian, American, French and Japanese divers.

The latter team, led by Lt Cdr Tsurugi Shimokubo, found the large auxiliary filled with like-minded personnel with similar kit.

"This is the third time Japanese teams have worked with the US and UK on this kind of exercise," Lt Cdr Shimokubo said.

"Sometimes the language barrier can be very difficult, but we persevere because it is important for all of us to improve our ability to communicate and co-operate with each other."

Like RN divers, the Japanese use the Remus robot submersible (more on that later...) which is a very handy bit of kit.

Continued on page 4



pictures: po(phot) paul a'barrow, frpu east, la(phot) dave jenkins, hms dragon, and us navy fifth fleet mass communication specialists

Mine games

Continued from page 3

“At one point we found an interesting sonar contact on the seabed and moved closer to have a look.

“On our video we found it was not a mine, but a small shoal of fish surrounding a fish trap. If we can detect a target that vague, think what we could do against something like a mine.”

IMCMEX was the first time the Japanese divers had been based aboard a British vessel.

“The culture and life on board are very different,” said Lt Cdr Shimokubo.

“But we found Cardigan Bay to be very comfortable, and the food in particular is very good!”

For Cardigan Bay’s Commanding Officer Capt Paul Minter RFA the presence of the international force has been both educational and reassuring. “To produce all this from scratch would be hard,” he says, pointing to the smudges on the horizon, blurred by the constant Middle Eastern heat haze. “This way we know that if the balloon goes up, we know we can react.”

Cardigan Bay’s mission is mirrored by the USS Ponce – pronounced ‘pon-say’, before you start titting – a 42-year-old American version of HMS Fearless and Intrepid.

She was lined up for the breaker’s yard until reactivated as a mother ship for the US’ Gulf-based mine warfare forces.

Now Scan Eagle drones are launched, scouring the seas for up to 18 hours a day, feeding live TV footage back to the operations room – the best way to stop mines is to stop them being laid.

Dominating the flight deck, however, is the MH53 Sea Dragon – an absolute beast of a helicopter – which can trawl a cutting wire behind it to scythe mines from their tethers before divers jump in to neutralise the explosives.

Ponce was brought back to life because, says her straight-talking captain Capt Jon Rodgers in a Tennessee drawl, “there is a very real mine threat” in the region.

“There are three major choke points in this region and that’s where mines would be most effective.”

To reinforce the importance of the region, in the bowels of the old ship from where the exercise is being directed, a large display screen shows hundreds of green markers – merchant shipping plying its lawful trade from the shores of Kuwait to the UAE.

An international mix of sailors – Britons, Americans, Dutch, French, Belgians *inter alia* – move the full panoply of mine warfare forces around hundreds of square miles of sea like chess pieces.

But IMCMEX isn’t focused entirely on open waters and keeping sea lanes free of mines. It’s about making sure a ship

- (a) leaves its port of departure safely,
- (b) sails safely throughout its passage
- (c) and arrives safely at its destination.

For (b) HMS Dragon was leading a convoy of merchant

vessels through the Strait of Hormuz before the minehunters took over, guiding the force through a lane in the southern Gulf ‘cleared’ of mines – known as a ‘Q Route’; it’s just what the RN did a decade ago before RFA Sir Galahad sailed into Umm Qasr.

To ensure (a) and (c), the Royal Navy’s specialist harbour clearance divers have deployed for the duration of the exercise. They are, says the unit’s commander Lt Nathan Isaacs, “the last piece of the mine warfare jigsaw”.

A couple of weeks ago, Fleet Diving Unit 3 were in Campbeltown for Joint Warrior. Now they’re on a rather drab jetty in Bahrain. Their kit can be transported in a couple of chacons... and their home is a couple of chacons and a tent. It’s rudimentary, but it’s what they enjoy.

Technology substantially helps the unit’s work these days, notably Remus 100 (the 100 signifies the depth in metres it works to).

About half the length of a torpedo, it runs about three metres above the seabed, looking for anything unusual – its side-scan sonar can pick up something as small as a 500ml bottle of water.

It’s set off on a pre-programmed route by the dive team. It’ll take about three to four hours to search a square kilometre of seabed and a similar amount of time to process the data.

Too long? Try doing it the mandraucic way with divers. “It would take about two weeks to search a harbour of this size,” explains PO(D) Gareth Buffrey, sweeping his arm across the breadth of Bahrain’s main Mina Salman port. “With this kit we can do it in three days.”

There’s a caveat, however. “The biggest challenge here is the environment,” the senior rating adds. “Electronics don’t like the heat – they sweat in these temperatures. You have to take a lot of care with them.”

Just like Seafox, when Remus returns from its mission and its data has been analysed – the latitude and longitude of any contacts are logged – it’s down to clearance divers to go in and inspect: it could be a bottle of water, or it could be a mine or underwater homemade bomb.

Working alongside the FDU3 team, like-minded Dutchmen, once again underlining the international nature of the exercise.

The reason why so many nations have RSVPed to the invite, says Cdre Ancona, is “a growing realisation that shipping is vulnerable. Old lessons are being re-learned. We need to be able to fight the mine threat whenever and wherever it rears itself.”

And that’s why IMCMEX and the meeting of ‘mine minds’ is important.

“What makes this a great exercise is that there are 40 nations all here doing the same thing, all working together,” says Shoreham’s Lt Cdr Hammon.

“Mine warfare demands a lot of patience. From Shoreham’s point of view, we have great kit, a great crew with specialist skills.”



The golden ‘hower

MEN of Harlech, march to glory...

It’s a shame we can’t give you a soundtrack to this photograph – and we’re not talking about the roar of the impressive array of jets on the deck of the USS Dwight D Eisenhower.

HMS Dragon’s Commanding Officer Capt Iain Lower struggles to make himself heard as he cons his ship in a double RAS, for at full blast from her loudspeakers blares the new destroyer’s signature tune – that’s *Rhyfelgyrch Gwyr Harlech* for Welsh speakers – as the Portsmouth-based warship takes up station with the Ike’s battle group.

Just 36 hours after taking over the reins as the UK’s Gulf guardship from HMS Monmouth, the Type 45 destroyer joined forces with Carrier Strike Group 8 – the most powerful naval task force on the Seven Seas.

As the Royal Navy’s premier air defender, it is Dragon’s mission to protect the strike group – flagship Eisenhower, one cruiser, three destroyers (including the USS Winston S Churchill which always has an RN navigator aboard), and the various squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 7 who give Ike her awesome striking power – from aerial attack courtesy of her Sea Viper missile system and impressive Sampson radar.

Dragon’s arrival was greeted by the strike group’s commander Rear Admiral Michael C Manazir, who personally piloted an F18 Hornet from the deck of his carrier – and carried out a high-speed flypast of the destroyer.

The action did not stop there as the Royal Navy warship moved in as part of a five-way refuelling operation so she could top up her tanks.

The operation – known as replenishment at sea – is typically carried out individually; occasionally two ships take on sustenance from a support vessel simultaneously.

Dragon was due to take on fuel from the USNS Walter S Diehl – which was providing fuel and stores to the Eisenhower and the cruiser USS Hué City.

Once the Hué City peeled away in a graceful turn to starboard, it left the way open for Dragon to take station 55 metres (180ft) from the Diehl with her gas turbines singing.

For the destroyer’s navigator, 28-year-old Lt Carla Higgins from Wolverhampton, this was a true test of planning, preparation and ship handling.

“It was amazing to think that the ship had come from training in the South Coast exercise areas and the first RAS on the deployment was in company with the Eisenhower,” she said.

“The team worked really well and all the hard work put into the planning and practice by everyone involved paid off in having a two-hour pit stop without any incident. It went like clockwork.”

While this was going on, Ike was simultaneously receiving supplies by helicopter from the USNS

Medger Evers as the Hué City stood guard over the force.

The operation was on a grander scale than RN warships would normally experience off Plymouth during weekly training, but the principles were just the same.

The refuelling was played out in 30°C heat and 90 per cent humidity – physically exhausting for those involved on Dragon’s upper decks; they were sustained by a liberal supply of choc ices.

“With the Welsh flag proudly flying from the halyards alongside the White Ensign, Dragon completed her refuelling with *The March of the Men of Harlech* to sign off over the upper deck broadcast,” said Dragon’s weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Kevin Miller.

“A Welsh flavour to the region that continues from where HMS Monmouth left off.”

Rear Admiral Manazir has high hopes for Ike’s work with Dragon “because the Brits are such fine, well-trained warfighters,” he says. “We will have a long future operating together with this class of ship.”

As for Dragon’s Capt Lower, he’s pleased with the way his ship’s company are getting stuck into the destroyer’s maiden deployment.

“The first few days were really important in setting the right tone for forthcoming operations,” he said.

As well as refuelling, Dragon has been getting to know her new comrades, putting faces to names, with sailors swapping places with their US counterparts to experience life aboard different ships – all of which will help the smooth running of the strike group.

“Whilst the Hué City is over 20 years old and our technology is more advanced, they have some systems that we don’t and so we really complement each other when operating together,” said 22-year-old LCIS Lee Sandy from Hull.

“This was my second visit to a US warship and it was good to see what communications equipment they had and, more importantly, how they used it.”

Surg Lt Tim Anderson, Dragon’s medical officer, visited the Ike to have a look at her medical facilities just in case he might need to call on them one day.

“They have fantastic facilities, exceptional for an afloat platform and reassuring for us if we ever had an incident that needed that higher level of medical care,” he said.

“Of course the carrier operates on a much larger scale – out of a crew of over 4,700 they get up to 140 patients a day. That compares to fewer than ten a day on here.

“They do have 11 fully-trained medical staff to deal with those, compared to the three we have in our medical team. We are really well provisioned to look after the crew on Dragon.”

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, HMS Dragon



Big ship, Mini VIP

YOU can never have too many photographs of a specially-liveried Mini guarded by a matelot in fatigues while parked on the flight deck of a Type 45 destroyer in the middle of an international harbour festival.

We give you Her Majesty’s Ship Defender, flying the flag for Blighty at Hamburg’s *Hafengeburtstag* (‘harbour birthday’) – billed as the world’s largest harbour festival.

This was the first overseas port of call for the recently-commissioned destroyer – indeed it’s the first time a Type 45 has sailed up the Elbe into Germany’s greatest port.

She was joined on the river by some 300 vessels – schooners, cruise liners (including the Queen Mary 2), brigs, steamers, cutters and warships – and an estimated one and a half million visitors who descended on the Hanseatic port over the three-day maritime festival.

As well as championing state-of-the-art RN technology, Defender used the festival to showcase British industry as part of the ‘GREAT Britain’ campaign.

To that end a Mini (built in Britain by German motoring giant BMW) with a Union Flag livery and GR8 BR1TA1N numberplate was craned on to flight deck which, thanks to its vast nature truly made the car look, er, mini...

Berthed next to and hosted by the German stealth frigate FGS Sachsen – whose features are not entirely dissimilar to Defender – the British ship welcomed more than 6,000 visitors aboard during her stay on the Elbe at the Überseebücke, which is roughly half way between the city centre and the distractions of St Pauli.

Cdr Philip Nash, Defender’s Commanding Officer, said Hamburgers had “warmly welcomed” his ship throughout her brief but high-profile visit.

“To be able to take part in such a fantastic event was a real treat and I know we have left Hamburg with first-class impressions of the Royal Navy and British trade and industry.

“On top of that, the respite and hospitality Hamburg had to offer has really revitalised us in a busy time of training for my ship’s company, as we prepare ourselves for future deployments.

He continued: “We’ve also witnessed first hand the close links we enjoy with the German Navy – being berthed side by side with FGS Sachsen is a clear demonstration of that strong bond between our two Services.

“I think the icing on the cake for visitors has been to see the GREAT Britain Mini on the flight deck. The combination of Defender and the Mini have provided an unusual, unique and spectacular reminder of the strength of iconic British design and technology.”

The Mini was on the latest leg of a round-Germany tour which has seen it ferried around the lakes of Mecklenburg, rock up at a jazz festival in Bremen, see the Brandenburg Gate and the Rhine, and even had premier David Cameron behind the wheel when he was in Berlin for a meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel in April.

As well as demonstrating the capability of their ship, Defender took the opportunity to show off their sporting talents.

The rugby team beat Hamburg Exiles 57-7, while Defenders’ five-a-side football team beat eight countries including Canada, Russia, Germany and Poland to win the final competition.



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Pictures: LA(Phot) Ben Shread, FRPU West



'land of hope and glory

AS THEIR ship nudges past Drake's Island, the crew of HMS Northumberland have only an inkling of the welcome waiting for them a few minutes later.

There were banners, cheers, tears – and some slightly sinister face masks – waiting for the 200 souls in Devonport Naval Base as the Type 23 frigate completed her seven-month pirate/terrorism-busting duties in the Indian Ocean.

Despite being mid-May it was a bitterly cold Devonshire day, but HMS Drake Volunteer Band strove to keep spirits, if not temperatures, up and a big cheer went up as Northumberland was spotted coming up the Hamaoze and heading towards her berth.

Excitedly waiting on the jetty was Vicky Saunders, partner of CPO Paul Baker, with their seven-month-old son Thomas.

"Paul hasn't seen Thomas since he left Plymouth last September when Thomas was just three weeks old," said Vicky.

"We managed to make a few Skype calls during the deployment but it's not the same as seeing him in the flesh and Thomas has grown so much since he last saw him."

Also on the jetty were the family of CPO Gary Crabtree. This was his final deployment before leaving the RN in July 2014; to mark the occasion they dressed up in naval uniforms and wore masks of his face to greet him.

Northumberland departed UK waters last October, since when the ship has steamed over 45,000 miles, crossed five time zones, visited 11 countries and, in Oman, hosted our heir to the throne.

The Prince of Wales met members of the ship's Royal Marines and Royal Navy boarding teams and the Merlin flight, before presenting PO Alan Richards with a Long Service Good Conduct medal for 15 years' Service.

Although Northumberland carried out 71 boarding operations whilst deployed, only one hit the headlines – a £5.5m cannabis bust earlier this year in which her Merlin helicopter was instrumental.

"We'd launched on a routine surface search sortie and were very quickly interested by two fast moving contacts," said pilot Lt Mike 'Howie' Howe.

"We managed to get a closer look and sure enough both boats were laden with bales and fuel drums – certainly worth pursuing."



● Mum's home... PO(Wtr) Hannah Robbins hugs her sons on the Devonport jetty

Pursue Northumberland and Merlin did. As soon as the runners sighted the ship, sea boats and helicopter, they "put pedal to metal" said Lt Howe and began tossing bales of cannabis overboard before surrendering.

"It was a big moment," said Merlin maintainer LAET Matt Thirkle. "We all wanted that big bust and it would be disappointing to come home without a headline. We were all hungry for more after that."

The helicopter was also asked to help when a merchant ship caught fire in pirate-prone waters off the coast of Somalia.

The Merlin found thick smoke pouring from its funnel – but they also realised the crew had it under control. However, the helicopter hung around as a very visible deterrent against any pirates who might try to hijack the stricken merchantman.

In all, 05 Flight clocked up 150 sorties totalling nearly 250 hours airborne, flying the equivalent of Land's End to John O'Groats nearly 50 times, while the Merlin's radar swept an area 40 times the size of the UK.

Such a high tempo placed a tremendous demand on the 14-strong team. The average temperature while deployed east of Suez was over 30°C – at times it was nearly 40°C.

By the end, said WO2 Dave Baxter, the flight's Senior Maintenance Rating, they'd become a "well-oiled machine".

Each day his maintenance team carried out an 'MOT' on the helicopter to ensure it was fit to fly. While it was airborne they kept the hangar clean, painted jacks and sorted out material and, once it landed, they serviced the Merlin ready for the next day's flying.

"We've all put in some very long hours up to this point and met some significant challenges along the way. The trick is to meet every challenge with a sense of humour, it keeps us going," WO2 Baxter said.

CPO(AET) Chris Thurgood added: "The maintenance plan for a Merlin deployment is a mammoth task and takes months of planning prior to embarkation."

"She's a very complicated beast with hundreds of complex systems and components so having everything you need to maintain her is like packing for a seven-month trip where you don't know exactly where you might end up."

Equally complex is Northumberland – and like the Merlin the frigate required a lot of TLC and effort from the ship's company in demanding conditions.

"I am extremely proud of my team who have done a tremendous job," said the ship's Commanding Officer Cdr Tristram Kirkwood.

"It's great for the crew to be home. They've been looking forward to some well-deserved leave with their families and friends."

Northumberland's place in the Indian Ocean has been taken by her sister HMS Kent.



Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill, CHF

847: mission accomplished

AFTER four tours of duty over Afghanistan, the mission of commando fliers is complete as the men and women of 847 Naval Air Squadron returned home.

May 23 was the date fixed in the diary as a four-month stint acting as the 'eyes in the skies' of ground forces and RAF Chinook and Merlin helicopters came to an end.

847 deployed to Afghanistan in January after a two-year break from the troubled land, this time flying the Army Air Corps' wheeled Lynx Mk9As.

As well as lacking the distinctive skids of Lynx previously flown by the squadron, the Mk9A has more powerful engines – the same as fitted to the successor Wildcats which are replacing them – and is armed with a .5 calibre machine-gun – "the ideal weapon for what we're doing out here," in the words of aircrewman L/Cpl Jordan Schofield.

The missions Jordan and his comrades have been flying have ranged from escorting RAF helicopters around Helmand to acting as the airborne eyes of international and Afghan troops and security forces when conducting patrols outside operating bases.

To meet those demands, the squadron's engineers and technicians 'turned-to' for 103 shifts and put in 10,500 man hours of work on the helicopters.

The result? A serviceability rate over 80 per cent – and over 90 per cent in the final month of the deployment – and 650 hours flown.

The final tour saw weather comparable to

the cold of Norway and, more recently, mid-30s Celsius. Personnel also struggled with a tropical storm which led to a 5in flood sweeping through the aircraft hangar, regular sandstorms and some of the highest gusts of winds ever recorded in Helmand during the final days of their deployment.

847's Commanding Officer Lt Col Nick Venn RM said his men and women left Afghanistan having forged "an enviable reputation" with all the units they had worked with since January – and having achieved "some real operational successes".

He continued: "This tour has been an exceptionally busy one in which the squadron has made a very positive contribution to operations in Helmand – a contribution that is universally recognised out here."

"The fantastic work rate and innovation of the engineering team has ensured that, despite only a small pool of aircraft, we have been able to 'punch above our weight', consistently ensuring that we always have aircraft ready to meet operational demands."

"In no small part, the work of the squadron has also contributed directly to helping create the secure environment that the Afghans need as they move towards effective self-governance and security – the same secure environment that will allow the UK to leave Afghanistan in due course."

40 Commando Taunton parade, page 9

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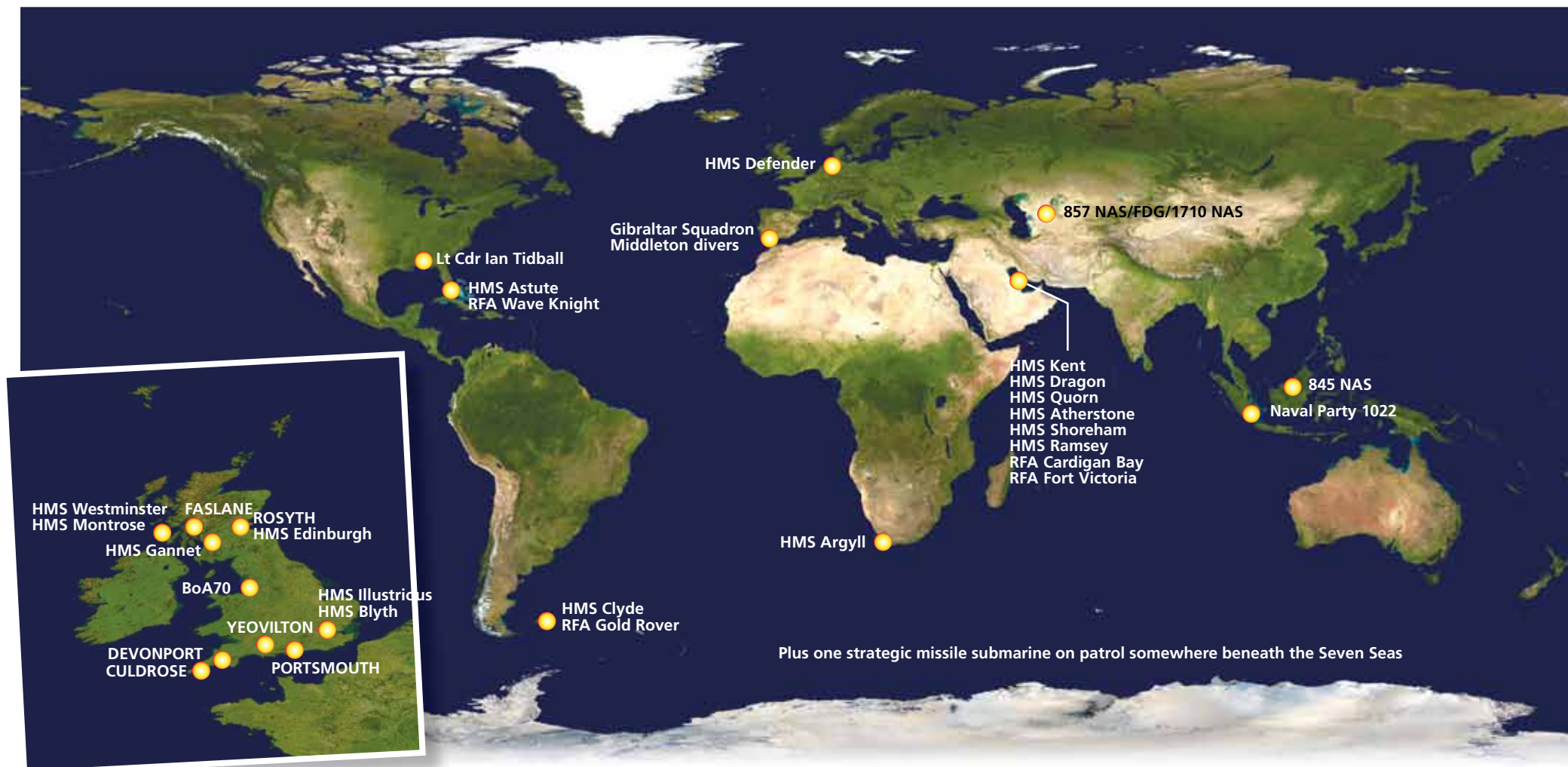
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QUIET old month.

Biggest mine warfare exercise ever staged in the Middle East.
Biggest military exercise in north-west Europe this year.
Biggest commemoration of the Royal Navy's most important battle in WW2.

Royal Marines complete a 12-year-mission in Afghanistan... while their aerial support finishes its fourth and final tour of duty.

Where to begin? Well, by now you'll have flicked through if not necessarily read *in toto*, the RN's involvement in IMCMEX in the Gulf – **HMS Shoreham, Ramsey, Atherstone, Quorn and Dragon**, plus **RFA Cardigan Bay** and **Fleet Diving Unit 3** (see pages 2-4).

You'll have learned, too, that **Dragon** has been working with the Eisenhower, while her sister **Defender** has been making her debut in Germany (see page 4).

And you'll know that **HMS Northumberland** is back from pirate-busting duties in the Indian Ocean, while **847 NAS** has flown its final mission over Helmand (see page 5).

So what don't you know? How about **HMS Ambush** 'rafting up' for the first time with **RFA Diligence** to prove the concept of A-boats joining forces with a depot ship (see opposite).

Her older sister **HMS Astute** is making strides towards front-line duties with final warm water trials in the Bahamas (see page 8).

Looking further into the future, the first full-time RN pilot has taken to the skies in the **F35 Joint Strike Fighter** (see right) as tests and trials continue in the USA, and there's yet more progress on the ship from which the next-generation jump jet will fly, **HMS Queen Elizabeth** (see page 17).

From the future to the past – or almost the past, the last Type 42 destroyer, **HMS Edinburgh** paid her final visit to the Scottish capital, stage two of her farewell tour of the UK (see page 11).

Stage one was London, where Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary events – reaching their climax in Liverpool as we rolled off the presses – got under way with high-profile ceremonies and services in the capital, attended by **HMS Illustrious, Blyth and Edinburgh** plus **771, 814, 815 NAS** and **RN Historic Flight** (see pages 14-15).

Were the Royal Navy today to face a similar submarine threat as that mastered seven decades ago, how would it cope? We joined the RN's No.1 sub hunters, **HMS Westminister**, off Scotland to find out (see pages 22-23).

Nearby the first **Joint Warrior** exercise of the year – billed as the largest ever staged – reached its suitably fiery conclusion (see the centre pages).

And one of the exercise's participants remained in Scottish waters for a week of firepower. **HMS Montrose** loosed every weapon aboard – known in RN parlance as a 'grand slam' (see page 26).

Rather more peacefully her sister **HMS Monmouth** completed her seven-month stint in the Gulf, a deployment which ended with a romantic gesture from one crew member (see page 8).

HMS Daring is now in the first days of a global deployment – the first by a Type 45 – which will see her represent the UK at the 100th birthday celebrations of the Royal Australian Navy (see page 8).

Jungle air and ground crew returned to their roots when a group from **845 NAS** paid homage to their forebears who served in Borneo 50 years ago during the Malay emergency (see page 18).

Continuing the mine warfare theme begun with the Gulf exercises, **Middleton's** divers headed to Gib for some very useful top-up training in waters rather warmer than Pompey; **Southern Diving Unit 1** got their hands on a new bomb disposal robot, the Cutlass; and **HMS Ledbury** found a WW2 mine on the very first day of her NATO deployment. Which was nice. See page 10 for details of all.

And finally, a big thank you to the people of Taunton, and an even bigger thank you to the extended family of **40 Commando**, who brought the curtain down on the Royal Marines' involvement in Afghanistan with a parade through the heart of Somerset's county town (see page 9).

THE Navy's first pilot of its next-generation jump jet says it will give the nation's future carriers "unrivalled" striking power.

After a month flying the F35 Lightning II – the most advanced stealth fighter in the world – Lt Cdr Ian Tidball has given the aircraft a glowing testimonial.

The veteran Harrier pilot is learning the art of flying the jet, also known as the Joint Strike Fighter, alongside fellow trailblazer Sqn Ldr Frankie Buchler from the RAF, supported by a 13-strong team of British maintainers – seven Royal Navy, six Royal Air Force.

Sqn Leader Buchler was the first full-time British military pilot to take the F35 aloft, followed a few days later by the Fleet Air Arm officer – although two Royal Navy reservists, in their 'day jobs' as test pilots have flown it: Cdr Simon Hargreaves and Lt Cdr Peter 'Wizzer' Wilson.

Speaking at Eglin Air Force Base, Lt Cdr Tidball – who has 1,300 hours behind him in the cockpit of Harriers, followed by time flying the American F18 Super Hornet – says the F35 is "a great aircraft to fly".

He continued: "It's extremely responsive, it's got a lot of thrust and the fly-by-wire control system makes the aircraft simple to fly."

"My background is the Sea Harrier – a pilot's aeroplane, a stick and rudder type aircraft. This takes away that sort of demand and frees up the ability of the pilot to operate the mission systems and sensors so that he can deploy the aircraft operationally, effectively."

The small British team are based with VMFAT 501 – Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501, known as the Warlords, who were formed specially in 2010 to bring the F35 into service with the US Marine Corps.

Collectively, the British and American pilots are putting in eight to 12 sorties every day from the air base in north-west Florida – "making progress every day" says Lt Cdr Tidball.

The UK currently has three test versions of the F35B – the short



● One of the UK ground crew at Eglin helps Lt Cdr Tidball with his kit in the cockpit of his F35 Joint Strike Fighter

Picture: US Marine Corps

take-off/vertical landing variant of the aircraft – which are being used not just to train the pilots, but also the engineers and technicians in the art of maintaining a stealth fighter which is two generations ahead of the Harrier, the Royal Navy's last front-line fast jet.

Lt Cdr Tidball says the shared experiences of the RN and RAF personnel "complement each other well" and for the first time the two pilots took up the initial two British prototypes for a joint flight.

"We are making good progress and a little milestone that really pleased me was that we were up, in formation, together," said Lt Cdr Tidball. "That really is an indication that this programme

is going somewhere. You've got British pilots flying British aeroplanes – so great."

"It's a testament to the people that are not just flying it, but are maintaining it as well."

Although the F35 is assembled in the USA by Lockheed Martin, the fighter is an Anglo-American venture with around one seventh of it designed and built in the UK. Around 130 British firms are involved in the project which is worth around £1bn per year to the UK economy.

What this Anglo-American venture has delivered is an aircraft which is "a massive step up".

Lt Cdr Tidball continues: "It will allow us to deliver a maritime strike capability that's frankly

unrivalled, so I'm very excited about the aircraft getting on to the carrier."

"The sooner that happens, the better – and I really hope that I'm lucky enough to be there, flying one of these aircraft off it."

Once training at Eglin is completed – probably next year – the British team is due to decamp from Florida to Edwards Air Force Base in California where, having learned how to fly the F35, they carry out operational tests to prepare it for front-line service.

The FAA and RAF will start receiving front-line F35s in 2016, operating out of RAF Marham, near King's Lynn, where land-based testing and training flights will continue through 2017. The first test flights from HMS Queen Elizabeth are planned in 2018.

WITH gathering clouds adding an ominous touch to Gare Loch, Britain's newest attack submarine HMS Ambush berths alongside support ship RFA Diligence – a crucial manoeuvre when the boat deploys on operations.

The nuclear submarine spent two days 'rafted up' alongside Diligence, which serves as a floating repair vessel and depot ship to meet the needs of Royal Navy vessels wherever they are in the world.

'Dili' – officially classed as a 'forward support ship' – spent some time east of Suez in support of the Silent Service's Trafalgar-class submarines which are regularly deployed to the Middle East region.

With the first A-boat, HMS Astute, due to be operational later this year followed by Ambush early in 2014, it's a manoeuvre which has to be practised and perfected with the first new hunter-killer submarines in a generation.

So in the calm, confined and safe waters just a few hundred yards from her berth, Ambush came alongside Diligence assisted by a cluster of tugs.

"Diligence provides essential services such as power, water and high-pressure air both at sea and alongside", explained Ambush's marine engineering officer Lt Cdr Martin 'Shades' Freeman.

"She can supply us with everything we need,

allowing us to take our own equipment down for maintenance or repair."

The vital support that Diligence offers is essential for modern submarine operations, extending the vessel's ability to remain in their operating area and lengthening their reach.

Speaking of the successful trial, Cdr Peter Green, the Mighty Bush's CO, said: "The professionalism and expertise of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is what keeps the Royal Navy moving – and this is no less true when you run on nuclear power.

"This trial has proven that wherever Ambush goes in the world, we can rely on unique

capabilities of Diligence to keep us operational."

Diligence fulfils numerous roles in support of both the Royal Navy's surface ships and submarines; she's fitted with a wide range of workshops for hull and machinery repairs, as well as the facilities for supplying electricity, water, fuel, air, steam, cranes and stores to 'rafted up' vessels.

She's the only vessel of her type in the Naval Service, supporting the Fleet during both Gulf conflicts.

As for Ambush, she's continuing her trials, tests and training through 2013 having been based in Faslane for eight months now. She was formally commissioned into the Royal Navy on March 1.

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU East



Mastering berth control

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Global duty for Daring

HAVING shown the navies and nations of the Middle East what she can do on her maiden deployment last year, HMS Daring is going one better in 2013: showing the world.

The Type 45 destroyer was due to leave Portsmouth at the end of May for the first round-the-world deployment by her class, a nine-month mission focusing extensively on the Asia/Pacific region.

The highlight – certainly for the 190-strong crew – will be the eight days of the Royal Australian Navy's 100th birthday.

Nineteen RAN vessels are taking part in the celebrations in Sydney Harbour which culminate in an international fleet review with 40 visiting warships and a dozen tall ships.

When not enjoying antipodean hospitality, the air defence destroyer will be representing the UK in Exercise Bersama Lima around the Malay peninsula – part of the Five Power Defence Arrangement annual programme of exercises in the region.

"This exciting deployment will do much to build on existing alliances, establish and strengthen new relationships and contribute to maritime security in the Asia Pacific – a region in which Britain has historic trade and security links," said her Commanding Officer Cdr Angus Essenhigh.

Ark heads for shipbreakers

HUNDREDS of people lined the Portsmouth sea front to see the most famous name in carrier aviation – and the most high-profile victim of the 2010 Defence Review – leave the South Coast for good.

Ark Royal was towed out of her home base on May 20, heading for the same Turkish breaker's yard as her older sister Invincible.

Leyal paid around £3m to dismantle the carrier – veteran of operations in the Adriatic in the 1990s and, most famously, the Iraq campaign of 2003 when she spearheaded the amphibious assault on the Al Faw peninsula.

Various schemes for Ark's post-RN fate were considered by Whitehall – a floating hotel, sinking her as a giant artificial reef and a heliport on the Thames in London – but rejected in favour of recycling.

The MOD has pledged that the last Harrier carrier, HMS Illustrious, will be saved for the nation when she retires next year after 32 years' service.

Carrier progress, page 17



Pictures: LA(Phot) Ben Shread, FRPU West

Back in Black (Duke)

ALTOGETHER now...

The boys are back in town...

After seven months away these lads are ready to party like it's 2013 as HMS Monmouth returns to her native Plymouth, her Gulf tour of duty complete.

Hundreds of cheering and banner-waving friends and family welcomed the frigate back to her homeport – all expectant.

Expectant but there was still the unexpected. Certainly 19-year-old Rachel Abbott wasn't expecting her boyfriend to get down on one knee. But 31-year-old LS Gary Richardson did just that (pictured right), flowers and ring in hand, to propose to the security guard.

A stunned and delighted Rachel accepted and burst into tears of joy. She said: "This is the best day of my life. I am euphoric. I'd always hoped he would propose, but daren't hope. He's good at keeping surprises."

Gary, who met Rachel at dance classes in Plymouth, said: "I'm so happy she accepted, though I was pretty sure she would. I've been planning this since we set sail from Plymouth months ago. It has been something to keep me going through the down times. Though it has been a good deployment. At least the ship kept it all secret, as they all knew. I swore them to secrecy."

Lt Will Hairsine, of Portsmouth, was met by his wife Rebecca, her arms full with their twins Sebastian and Lyra-Rose, 17 weeks. The Royal Marines Band Plymouth performed a tune composed by Will's brother Sam, a band sergeant, especially for the event.

Wilf Stanley, 21, was welcomed by his girlfriend Harley Moore, of Birmingham and their 21-month-old son Riley, who was dressed in an immaculate mini-sailor suit. Harley said: "We're both so pleased he's back. Riley missed



him even though he's so little."

LET Gavin Smith, of Bedford was hugged by his enthusiastic fiancée Hayley Shaw, of Plymouth – three weeks ahead of their marriage. "It's been a long but great tour. But I was helped by the thought of seeing my family and especially of getting married in June," said the sailor.

Hayley added: "It's been a struggle with him being away. But

we have a wedding planned and he's back in time to help plan it.

"The children have also been looking forward to him coming home, but didn't know exactly when. This is a treat for all of us."

Monmouth's clubz LPT Danny Card received two Royal Navy awards for his excellence in providing organised entertainment and for improving health and fitness on board.

He managed to combine both by stripping off and standing on Monmouth's forecandle and holding the Armed Forces Day flag aloft as part of an international campaign to raise awareness in the June 29 event.

"I have helped the ship's company lose weight individually, add muscle mass and get fitter generally while enjoying it," he said.

"I like to think I had a role in boosting morale when the lads were going through their own low points, by giving them something positive to concentrate on."

Clubz also spurred his shipmates on to some impressive athletic achievements: rowing the Suez on machines in record time for an RN ship's company; her Royal Marines cycled the distance from their base in Faslane to Dubai on a static bike; and PO(CIS) James 'Dutchy' van der Linden ran 1,000 miles around the Black Duke's upper deck for charity.

As for Monmouth herself, she steamed more than 53,000 miles – twice around the globe – despite the bulk of her deployment being confined to the Gulf on maritime security.

"The value of the past seven months has been to assure our friends in the region of the United Kingdom's commitment to ensuring peace and stability in the long term," said the Black Duke's Commanding Officer, Cdr Gordon Ruddock.

"We have had a busy few months where we have provided both assurance to friendly powers and legitimate maritime traffic, and deterrence to those who would commit illegal acts in international waters which impact directly on the UK economy."

"My team have done a tremendous job over the past seven months."

F35 decision saved £1.2bn

THE decision to revert to jump jet versions of the Navy's next-generation stealth fighter for our future carriers saved the taxpayer an estimated £1.2bn says the Government's financial watchdog.

It also means the F35 Joint Strike Fighter will be operating from the decks of both HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales from 2020, not 2023.

The National Audit Office pored over the details of the decision to abandon plans to fit one of the two 65,000-tonne leviathans with catapults and arrestor gear – 'cats and traps' in carrier parlance – so they could operate traditional fast jets.

The traditional carrier version of the F35, the Model C, has a greater range and heavier payload.

But the decision to ditch the jump jets, plump for the F35C and install cats and traps – taken by the MOD in 2010 – was based on "flawed assumptions" and inaccurate data, said the NAO.

Whitehall pulled the plug on cats and traps early last year as costs of the project spiralled from an estimated £800m to £2bn.

It was also worried that to wait until 2023 to fly the fifth-generation stealth fighter from a carrier was too long – and so reverted to original plans to buy the F35B, the jump jet version of the F35.

That decision, says the NAO, has delayed UK Joint Strike Fighter operations by two years and means that £74m has been written off – a cost which could, however, have been ten times higher had the MOD delayed beyond spring 2013.

Whitehall acted quickly when it realised costs were rocketing, says the audit office, and the decision to return to the F35B will save around £1.2bn over the next ten years and an estimated £600m over the next 30.

The NAO's head, Amyas Morse, said the MOD "acted promptly once it became clear that pursuing the option to buy the carrier variant would cost a lot more money and add another three years to the whole programme."

The decision also means the jets can fly from both carriers, not one, so they should always be on call for carrier strike operations.

But the auditors say there is still inconsistency in the carrier programme – alternating decisions on the type of Joint Strike Fighter, delays to the successor to the eye-in-the-sky 'Bagger' Sea Kings, Crowsnest, which will not be ready until 2022 – which must be resolved if Whitehall wants to deliver value for money.

The overall cost of the carrier programme has risen by 55 per cent between 2005 and 2012 to nearly £5.5bn, while the price tag of an F35 has doubled over the past decade; it currently stands at around £91m per aircraft.

It's not all work, work, work...

BRITAIN'S first new hunter-killer submarine in a generation is preparing to take her place on the front line as her final trials come to an end in the USA.

Faslane-based HMS Astute has been carrying out warm water and other trials in the Bahamas and off the Eastern Seaboard as she gears up for her first operational patrol towards the end of this year.

It's the second stint of trials in the region for the first of seven nuclear-powered boats in the Astute-class; over the winter of 2011-12 the submarine was tested extensively in these same waters, including sparring with the USS New Mexico – a near-counterpart in the US Navy's Silent Service.

This time around, Astute has focused on warm weather tests – sea temperatures of 25°C, rather than the more usual 10°C on the Clyde – and other capability trials ahead of her operational handover.

The submarine has been making use of AUTECH – the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre on Andros Island in the Bahamas – the principal proving ground of sub-surface warfare on the world's oceans.

The ranges off Andros Island – south-west of Nassau – are centred on a 6,000ft deep natural phenomenon, the Tongue of the Ocean, a huge deep-water bowl carved out of coral reef, which resembles the Rolling Stones' famous tongue logo. To this natural wonder is added humanity's ingenuity: the tongue is crammed with sensors and hydrophones to record reams of data on how well a submarine is performing.

Despite long days and equally long nights during the testing on the Bahamian ranges, Astute was able to give small groups of her 98-strong crew time ashore for some rest and relaxation on Andros and couldn't resist a traditional hands to bathe allowing the submariners to take a dip in the crystal-clear waters.

After a good month's testing at AUTECH, Astute made for Kings Bay in Georgia – home of the US Navy's Atlantic-based ballistic missile submarines – to prepare for the final series of trials and stock up ready for her return to the Clyde.

The boat's Commanding Officer Cdr Stephen Walker presented newly-qualified submariners with their Dolphins, served in a traditional tot of rum and accompanied with the time-honoured cap tally: HM Submarines.

Throughout their stay at Kings Bay, the Britons were hosted by the crew of the USS Wyoming, an American ballistic missile boat. On a hot afternoon the visitors challenged them to a five-a-side football competition, ultimately won by Astute's weapon engineers.

With bags full of 'gizzits' and more than a few stories to spin the crew mustered for a final photograph on their boat's casing under the Georgia sun before resuming their trials.

So far, says Cdr Walker, both Astute and her crew have been tested thoroughly by these latest trials.

"Both the boat and my team have made me proud to be their captain," he said.

"My ship's company have been working hard during our time away and have been striving in support of a fantastic new capability hosted in this magnificent submarine."

"It has meant many long days focused on the task in hand – and then evenings catching up on the domestics and engineering aspects of keeping a boat at sea."

Once the trials in the western Atlantic are completed, Astute is due to return home to Faslane. Following a period of operational sea training – required of any Royal Navy ship or submarine preparing to deploy – she will be available for front-line duties.



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AN ESTIMATED 15,000 people turned out to see the final episode in the Royal Marines' dozen-year campaign in Afghanistan: a parade through the heart of Taunton by the men of 40 Commando.

The good folk of Somerset gave the green berets a rousing reception as they marched through the centre of the town, while the Duke of Edinburgh – the Corps' honorary head – presented the men with campaign medals back at Norton Manor, a few miles away.

40 were the first Royal Marines into Afghanistan and the last out – their return to base last month brings the curtain down on the commandos' involvement in the troubled land.

Over those dozen years, the unit has deployed four times to the country at a cost of 18 lives, while 3 Commando Brigade has suffered 61 deaths – and many more wounded.

"We genuinely puffed out our chests today on this special occasion," 40's Commanding Officer Lt Col Matt Jackson told the crowds.

"Thank you for your overwhelming support and for allowing us to march through the wonderful town of Taunton."

Addressing the massed ranks of marines in Taunton's town square, the mayor Cllr Libby Lisgo called for a minute's silence to "remember and say a silent thank-you to the brave" who had made the ultimate sacrifice.

"My thoughts and those of Taunton

are with the families and friends of the deceased, for whom life will never be the same again," she said.

The 700 Royal Marines – back from successfully helping the Afghan National Forces take lead responsibility for security and military tasks – then returned to Norton Manor for the presentation of medals to those whose tour of duty in Helmand had been their first (veterans of previous Operation Herricks had already received their decorations).

After the parade at which Prince Philip, Captain General of the Royal Marines, took the salute, Capt Jack Broughton, second in command of 40 Commando Logistics Company, hugged his wife Gillian and his 21-month-old son Thomas.

"It's great to have my wife and lad here. It is great to be back home and to see Thomas so much bigger than when I left seven months ago," he said.

"The town centre parade was very uplifting and shows how much people have been thinking of us while we were away."

"The parade and march-past was a fitting finale for all the operational tours by Marine units in Afghanistan over the years. Everyone did us proud."

Gillian said: "It was a great atmosphere in Taunton. Thomas loved waving and breaking his Union Jack flags at the march."

This final tour of duty in Helmand – with the heavy weapons section of Charlie Company – was the third in six years for

28-year-old Cpl Sebastian Rolland.

"It gives me a feeling of massive pride to march through Taunton and have everyone cheering and clapping. It means a lot to have so many people's support. The medals parade was very stirring and it was a great honour to have the Captain General there for all the lads."

"Having been to Afghan three times I have noticed the huge difference from when there was a concentration on heavy weapons use in the early tours, to now an emphasis on successfully mentoring the Afghan forces. It is very rewarding to see them taking on responsibility for security themselves."

His unit is now half-way through eight weeks of leave before resuming training.

Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell, FRPU West

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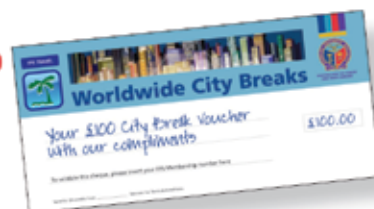


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Blade rumbler

THIS is a Royal Navy cutlass – 21st-Century style.

This is the sophisticated new remote-controlled vehicle, the £1m 'Cutlass', to give the Navy's diving teams the edge in bomb disposal – pictured by LA(Phot) Dean Nixon.

The six-wheeled Cutlass can be used to remotely neutralise homemade bombs – improvised explosive devices – left by terrorists, and is being introduced to the Southern Diving Group, demonstrated here by Plymouth's Southern Diving Group 1.

"Cutlass has many technological advances over the previous 'wheelbarrow' system," explained Lt Cdr Ross Balfour, Officer in Charge SDU1.

"It has a multiple-articulated weapons boom which replicates the movements of a human arm, allowing the operator unrivalled access to an enclosed space, like a vehicle. It is controlled via computer and fibre optic link with advanced optics allowing exceptional visual awareness of the area and any device.

"Cutlass represents a major improvement in our explosive ordnance disposal capability whilst improving safety for the general public and our divers."

He and his fellow divers took the opportunity to demonstrate their new piece of kit when the head of Royal Navy Mine Warfare and Diving, Capt Phil Milburn, visited SDU1's headquarters in Devonport Naval Base. He watched as Cutlass dealt with a simulated car bomb at an exercise area.

The captain, who is in charge of all RN minehunters, patrol craft and the Fisheries Protection Fleet, was shown aspects of how the divers assist civil agencies, keeping the countryside and coastline safe from unexploded devices which are often discovered by walkers on the coast, uncovered by tides or lifted by unsuspecting fishing vessels from the sea bed or old 'souvenir' WW1 grenades found in houses.

"We showcased the diverse skill set provided by the Royal Navy clearance diving branch and demonstrated how we go about providing round-the-clock cover to protect the public from unexploded ordnance and suspect devices," Lt Cdr Balfour explained.

"The divers also demonstrated the seven-metre-deep training tank, divers using closed-circuit re-breathing equipment, lifting and moving a practice bomb with a remote airbag and attaching dummy explosive charges to simulate rendering it safe."



Midd in the Med

LT SAM Jane makes his way to the bed of the Med as he and fellow divers from HMS Middleton swap England's south coast for the warm waters of Gibraltar for a week of high-tempo training.

With their ship in dry dock in her home base of Portsmouth, the dive team decided that rather than kick their heels they could get in a week's practice on the Rock – making use of its excellent facilities and Mediterranean waters to hone their skills across the full spectrum of diving operations.

The five-strong team – executive officer Lt Jane, LD Duncan Watt and AB(D)s Dan Box, Tom Davies and Will Davis – made use of the facilities of the Gibraltar Clearance Diving Element, based on the harbour's South Mole, just a minute or so from the open waters of the Med.

After a day going through kit checks and safety briefs and the like, and a practice dive on the wreck of the SS Rosslyn, which sank off the Rock in shallow waters in 1916, it was time for four days of fast-paced training: everything from search techniques and helping stricken divers, to lifting mines from the seabed and carrying out underwater repairs.

For the latter, the team use the Open Space Diving System – with air fed from the surface via an umbilical cord. It means the divers can remain under water longer as they carry out repair work.

In this instance they had to cut away an underwater obstruction – aided by underwater camera with video capability and a pneumatic grinder to do the cutting.

Although it's a powerful bit of kit, beneath the water's surface the grinder acts a bit like a propeller so a second diver acts as back-up, leaning against his

colleague's back to keep him in position to cut safely and accurately.

While that was going on underwater, on the surface the rest of the divers were practising various emergency procedures such as changing the air supply and generally making sure everything was proceeding to plan.

The highlight of the Gib training was lifting a drill mine from the seabed using the 'enclosed mine lifting bag' – it looks like a large inflatable yellow submarine.

The method involves raising a suspected mine in one area, then moving it safely to another, quieter stretch of ocean, lowering it back to the seabed and finally disposing of it safely – a tried and tested method of dealing with historic or present-day mines.

And that was the training on the Rock completed. "It was so beneficial for us. We could have sat around for a few days with our ship in maintenance, but we thought: let's do something," said AB Box.

AB Davies added: "More people should make use of Gibraltar. It's really easy to use. Conditions are better, the water's warmer. It's great to get out there, get hands-on experience. It was a really, really good experience."

The divers are part of Crew 3 and will soon be shifting from Middleton to her sister ship HMS Brocklesby, which will spend the rest of 2013 around UK waters carrying out route survey work and undergoing training.

Early next year they'll decamp again, this time to one of the two Hunt-class ships permanently based in Bahrain as part of the latest rotation of minehunter crews in the Gulf.

Duke takes divisions at Dartmouth

LEADERS of yesterday and tomorrow were honoured at the spiritual home of the Royal Navy's Officer Corps when the Duke of York visited Dartmouth.

The Falklands veteran was guest of honour at Lord High Admiral's Divisions – one of the highlights in the calendar at Britannia Royal Naval College.

In 2013, those divisions saw around 100 newly-qualified officers commissioned at the end of 30 weeks of intensive training.

"It is a rare opportunity to come to where I was trained and it always brings back fond memories of all the 'terrible' things that went on here," the Duke told those passing out.

"Rather than this being the end of something as you pass out, this is the beginning of your careers. You now join the Fleet, which although reduced in numbers, is as professional now as when it was started so many years ago.

"You are the leaders of the future for the Royal Navy and a huge amount of effort has been put into teaching you leadership at the personal and strategic levels. I congratulate you on passing through Dartmouth and wish you a lot of success whether you go on to be a submariner or an aviator."

The Duke of York, who completed his initial training at BRNC in 1979, represented his father, granted the historic title of Lord High Admiral by the Queen on his 90th birthday in 2011.

Among those completing training was 25-year-old Lt Tom Smith from Plymouth, whose father WO1 Garry Smith serves with FOST in Devonport.

"Training has been an endurance test of limits and resolve," said Tom. "I go forward feeling far more confident in my abilities, with new skills and most importantly with a network of close friends bonded through this shared experience. I'll blaze a trail to follow my dad from warrant officer to lieutenant and hopefully to Admiralty."

During the parade Prince Andrew congratulated four WW2 Royal Navy veterans from Dartmouth, all of whom had recently been awarded the Arctic Star: retired commanders Tommy Handley and Harold Lloyd, retired Lt (A) Freddie Harsant and Sydney Thompson all served on the bitter but vital convoys to Russia between 1941 and 1945.

The college's Commanding Officer Capt Jerry Kyd said the event was "the most prestigious parade" in Britannia's calendar.

"We were delighted to have His Royal Highness as the guest of honour and hope that being here brought back memories of his own passing out at Lord High Admiral's Divisions in 1979 – attended by the Queen.

"The cadets who were on parade have worked hard to reach the standards required during their demanding 30-week course and earn their place in the Royal Navy."

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Gloom with a view

AND what a view: a German Type 'C' WW2 mine – known in RN parlance as a 'GC' – found by HMS Ledbury's team on the very first day of their minehunting deployment.

The Hunt-class ship left home in Portsmouth to take up station with a NATO minehunting force in the Med.

Before joining that group, the ship carried out a final period of training in home waters: Weymouth Bay.

After picking up a contact on her sonar, Ledbury sent her Seafox submersible down to investigate.

"As soon as the camera of our Seafox panned on to the contact it was obvious that the explosive fill had been eroded from the casing," explained operations officer Lt Lee Funnell.

"We saw a conger eel looking back at us from the round hole that would have contained one of the fusing mechanisms of the mine."

Unfortunately worsening weather prevented the Ledbury team from dealing completely with the mine; its location was recorded and details passed on to the Southern Diving Group to deal with.

Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Justin Hains said the find off Portland was exactly what was expected of his ship when serving with the international force over the coming four months.

"Finding historic ordnance and rendering it safe is a core role of the NATO Group, so I am pleased to establish our credentials so early in the deployment," he said.

"The GC is one of the largest historic sea mines and can still present a very real danger, especially to trawlers or when washed up on beaches."



Pictures: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Edinburgh



The good auld days

WELL, this is very nearly the end.

Not just of the Privilege Parade, but of the career of HMS Edinburgh – and every Type 42 destroyer which has gone before her.

Watched by hundreds of tourists and inhabitants of the Scottish capital, the crew of Britain's final Type 42 turn to acknowledge the salute from the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the Right Honourable David Wilson, in front of the City Chambers in High Street.

A couple of hundred yards further along the world-famous Royal Mile and the hour-long march, led by the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland, came to an end.

Edinburgh was port two on a three-stop tour of the UK (first London – see pages 14-15 – then Liverpool as part of Battle of the Atlantic commemorations as *Navy News* went to press).

London was most definitely high-profile (a berth alongside Belfast) but Lusty, as carriers generally do, bagged much of the media and public interest.

In the Scottish capital, however, the Fortress of the Sea had it all to herself – and the good folk of Edinburgh did not disappoint during her six-day goodbye – “an event of some magnitude,” as Cdr Nick Borbone, final commanding officer of the Fortress of the Sea, put it.

“There is no easy way to bid farewell to a strong affiliation like the one HMS Edinburgh has enjoyed with this most historic city.

“Scottish hospitality is legendary and throughout the three decades of service which this ship has given, the fondness shown to HMS Edinburgh by the city has grown stronger and stronger.

“Such support cannot be underestimated and, while we will of course feel much sadness, it is also a time for celebration of this long relationship and the great service of this fine ship.”

Upon arrival at Leith – Edinburgh was afforded a berth opposite the former Royal Yacht Britannia – the destroyer hosted a farewell reception for more than 60 VIPs and dignitaries, including the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, as a way of thanking the city for the consistent hospitality over the years.

The evening finished with the Royal Marines Band treating

guests to a selection of music, including a Beat Retreat.

And the city responded with a reception of its own in the City Chambers once the sailors had completed their privilege parade – north of the border military units are not granted ‘freedom of the city/borough’ in quite the same sense as elsewhere in the UK.

On the passage from the Thames to the Forth, the ship carried ten Sea Cadets from TS Valiant in Dunbar, 30 miles along the coast from Edinburgh.

PO(SCC) Mike Kaszuba, the cadets’ CO, said: “We have had a really great time on board. The cadets were well looked after by all the crew and it has given them an insight on how a warship is run. The ship’s company were a true inspiration.”

Indeed, nine crew especially; they left the ship in London and cycled 450 miles to rejoin her in Leith.

They did so via Coventry, Sheffield, York and Newcastle – all cities which once had Type 42s carrying their names around the globe.

By the time the riders reached Leith after five days in the saddle, they’d collected just shy of £900 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Other beneficiaries of the sailors’ deep pockets were the staff and patients of the Simpsons Special Baby Care Unit at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary – the ship’s chosen charity.

The ship’s company handed over a cheque for £1,500 which will be used to help purchase a ‘Glidescope’ – it helps with intubating premature babies with breathing difficulties – and toured the unit to get a flavour of the good work done there.

From hundreds of people turning out to watch the Privilege Parade – to thousands of people turning up at the quayside in Leith.

Despite torrential downpours at time, more than 2,300 Edinburghers took a final look around in the six hours the destroyer’s gangway was open.

“The level of support we received during our public open day was humbling and a real joy – the enthusiasm was infectious,” said Cdr Borbone.

The narrow passageways and cramped compartments were slightly quieter the following day when private tours were arranged for local war veterans and members of the Royal Naval Association.

Edinburgh departed the Scottish capital in a style befitting both ship and city: music from the Royal Marines Band again, plus a piper playing on Britannia, and the city’s Lord Provost went aboard for the short journey out of harbour before he departed the

destroyer for the final time.

Edinburgh was due to make her final entry to Portsmouth around 10.30am on May 31 – with a flypast from Fleet Air Arm aircraft past and present – before the formal act of decommissioning in the Naval Base on June 6.

When his country needed him, Eddie was there.



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A shine which never dulls

IN THE years since 1982, the name HMS Sheffield has been imbued with sadness.

Even though another ship has borne the proud name since – and a predecessor served with distinction for a quarter of a century – mention ‘Sheffield’ and thoughts invariably turn to Tuesday May 4 1982 when the Type 42 destroyer which carried the South Yorkshire city’s name around the globe was fatally hit by an Exocet missile off the Falklands.

To this day aboard RN warships damage control posters feature the burned out hull of the ill-starred Type 42 as a reminder of how fire can rampage through one of Her Majesty’s Ships.

But there is *another* Sheffield. For the first 11 years of her existence, the ship was regarded as something of a modern wonder, a leap into the age of computers, missiles and turbines – in many ways interest in her mirrored HMS Daring 35 years later.

In a month when this famous breed of destroyers passes into history, let us return to the beginning of the Type 42 story.

Sheffield and her younger sisters were born of the need to protect the Fleet against air attack – and to replace an axed class of ship.

Originally four Type 82 destroyers would have been the Fleet’s principal aerial shield. But when the future aircraft carrier programme was cancelled in the mid-60s, the Type 82s largely died with it. Only HMS Bristol was ever built.

In place of the 82s, Naval architects proposed a smaller, cheaper solution: the Type 42, drawing on many of the lessons of the abandoned destroyer programme.

But whereas Bristol was a child of the early 60s, Sheffield was ordered five years later – and benefitted much from the white heat of technology.

Bristol was powered by steam and gas. Sheffield was all gas turbines. Gone were Bristol’s wooden decks. Bristol had no hangar. The 42s did – and hence a permanent helicopter presence.

The various technological advances meant that Sheffield had a complement of 280 men – “enjoying such amenities as a closed-circuit television studio, a library and a laundry” – a good 100 fewer souls than on Bristol.

Cost-wise, however, the reality of inflation in the early 1970s meant Sheffield proved only £1m cheaper than Bristol – a saving of



● Shiny Sheff demonstrates her impressive manoeuvrability in this rare colour transparency of the destroyer at sea from November 1976

about £7m in 2013 terms; by the time the last 42, HMS Edinburgh, was completed, the bill had risen to £130m (around £320m today).

A common thread from Bristol through Sheffield to Edinburgh was her main armament: the Sea Dart missile system.

From the old Sheffield, scrapped just three years before her successor was laid down, the new destroyer took her motto – *deo adjuvante proficio* (with God’s help, I will make progress); various mementoes, including a badge lovingly made from a piece of armour plate; part of a nickname (the cruiser was ‘Old Shiny’; the destroyer ‘Shiny Sheff’); affiliates and associations with the city of steel; and several members of the old ship’s company, including the NAAFI canteen manager who’d joined the cruiser back in 1938.

But while celebrating her history, the new Sheffield relished being at the forefront of the computer age.

The Whitehall blurb trumpeted a new generation of “technologically-advanced ships which will make up the Royal

Navy of the future”, while her first commanding officer, Capt Robert Heath, reckoned the Russians were “at least a generation behind this ship”.

There could be no greater signal that Sheffield marked something new, something special than for the Queen to launch the destroyer – a monarch typically, though not exclusively, launches capital ships.

Yet something of a cloud hung over the day when Her Majesty came to Barrow-in-Furness to pronounce the immortal words “I name this ship...” – Thursday June 10 1971.

Although Vickers workers celebrated the Royal occasion – and news, announced that very day by defence minister Lord Balniel that they would be building another Type 42, HMS Cardiff – two of their number were absent.

Just five weeks beforehand the Vickers yard – and the ship – had been rocked by a fatal explosion.

As workers coated Sheffield’s fresh water tanks with an anti-corrosion layer, there was a blast which left two men dead, a third

injured and left a hole 25ft long and up to two feet wide in places.

To ensure the destroyer was ready in time, Vickers cut the identical section out of another 42 taking shape in their yard next to Sheffield.

In one of naval history’s great ironies, that ship was the Argentine Hercules; in just 11 years’ time the two ships would be on opposing sides.

It would be nearly four more years before Sheffield was ready to take her place in the Royal Navy’s line of battle.

As the lead ship in her class – sometimes referred to as the Sheffield – and (less frequently) Town-class – the new destroyer underwent an extensive trials programme.

Hot weather trials. Cold weather trials. Sea Dart trials. She put 50,000 miles on the clock with those first-of-class trials, plus first deployments to the US and Caribbean.

The first commission gave the Queen a chance to catch up with her ship (she’d missed the commissioning in February 1975

courtesy of an official visit to Mexico); Shiny Sheff was asked to escort the Royal Yacht Britannia on a state visit to Denmark – and the destroyer was one of 170 vessels arrayed for the Silver Jubilee Review in the Solent.

And there were plenty of NATO duties in Atlantic waters (including the improbably-named exercise Northern Wedding), too, before a first refit in her home base of Portsmouth from June 1979–November 1980.

The yard’s shipwrights had at least 350 manuals and handbooks to pore over while refitting Sheffield... and those booklets didn’t cover the radars and weapons systems.

When she emerged from her overhaul, Shiny Sheff resumed trials and work-up before a deployment to the Gulf – war between Iraq and Iran was raging and tanker traffic in the region was threatened.

The destroyer was due home in Portsmouth on April 6 1982 – but four days before her return, the Argentine *junta* sent its troops into the Falklands.



Norway..... 1940
Spartivento 1940
Atlantic..... 1941-43
Bismarck..... 1941
Mediterranean 1941
Malta Convoys..... 1941
Arctic..... 1941-43
North Africa..... 1942
Barents Sea 1942
Biscay 1943
Salerno..... 1943
North Cape 1943
Falkland Islands..... 1982

Class: Type 42 destroyer (batch 1)
Pennant number: D80
Motto: *deo adjuvante proficio* (with God’s help, I will make progress)
Builder: Vickers, Barrow
Laid down: January 15, 1970
Launched: June 10, 1971
Commissioned: February 16, 1975
Sunk: May 10, 1982, after Exocet missile strike May 4, 1982
Displacement: 3,500 tons
Length: 125m (410ft)
Beam: 14.6m (48ft)
Draught: 5.2m (17ft)
Speed: 30 knots
Complement: 280
Propulsion: 2x COGOG RR Olympus TM3B gas turbines; 2x RR Tyne RM1C gas turbines for cruising; two shafts producing 50,000SHP
Armament: Twin Sea Dart missile launcher; 4.5in Mk 8 gun; 2x 20mm Oerlikon; Shipborne Torpedo Weapon System
Helicopter: 1 x Lynx

As a result, 20 Sheffield men never came back, killed either by the initial impact of the Argentine Exocet, or by the resulting fires.

The ship herself succumbed to her wounds while under tow on May 10 1982.

She – and the men who died in her – are remembered with a simple cross and memorial cairn on Sealion Island, the nearest land to where the destroyer was hit.



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



IN A month when the fabled class of destroyer bows out, here are our couple of iconic Type 42 images – courtesy of the Imperial War Museum and its seemingly inexhaustive photographic archive.

On the left (GLF 829), Type 22 frigate – and flagship of RN forces in the Gulf – HMS London is sandwiched between two unidentified 42s during operations in 1991, the last time the destroyers’ main armament was fired in anger; HMS Gloucester famously shot down an Iraqi Silkorm as it headed for the American battleship USS Missouri – the first time a missile has shot down another missile.

And on the right (CT 2396), the third ship in the class, HMS Cardiff, leads the second, HMS Birmingham, and an unidentified third Batch 3 (stretched) 42 on manoeuvres in 1997.

‘The Brum’ became the first ship in the class to pay off, decommissioning at the end of 1999 after 23 years’ service; she was broken up in Spain the following year.

Cardiff’s last act was to participate in the 2005 Fleet Review. She shared Birmingham’s fate in 2008 – but in Turkey, not Spain.

■ THESE photographs – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



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- What your connection to the Armed Forces is
- An email address and telephone number to contact you if you make it through to the second audition

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● Sailors line the flight deck of HMS Illustrious as the carrier passes the O2 Arena, while Yeoman Warders stand atop the ski ramp as the ship manoeuvres near Canary Wharf

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon

Swordfish leads capital fly-past

A FLY-PAST over Central London and the commando helicopter carrier HMS Illustrious, moored at Greenwich, brought the rare sight of a vintage Royal Navy torpedo bomber to the capital city.

The legendary World War 2 Fairey Swordfish biplane from the Royal Navy Historic Flight led a formation of current Naval aircraft to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Atlantic.

Making up the rest of the Fleet Air Arm formation were four helicopters, two representing each Royal Naval Air Station – a Jungle Sea King and Maritime Lynx from Yeovilton and from Culdrose a Merlin anti-submarine hunter from 814 (the Flying Tigers) Naval Air Squadron and a Search and Rescue Sea King from 771 NAS.

Lt Will Legge of 814 NAS was part of the Culdrose Merlin crew. “Flying in the formation with other FAA aircraft was memorable enough, especially as the open-cockpit Swordfish represented the aircraft many Royal Navy aircrew flew so heroically during the war.

“It was a privilege to be part of the Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary flypast on such a grand occasion.

“It recognises the courage and

sacrifices made by men of the Fleet Air Arm, that all those years ago ensured freedom for our nation.”

The Fleet Air Arm played a crucial role in the battle, with more than 40 Naval Air Squadrons flying some of the most hazardous missions imaginable during the six-year campaign, providing vital air cover for convoys.

The campaign demonstrated the enduring importance of control of the sea, guaranteeing a highway to transport raw materials, munitions, and men between the USA and the UK across the North Atlantic.

After the fly-past the 814 NAS Merlin landed on HMS Illustrious to the delight of the guests gathering for the Battle of Atlantic 70th Anniversary dinner and the traditional Naval Sunset ceremony on the flight deck.

Among veterans watching was Swordfish Telegraphist Air Gunner Ron Underwood, who flew with 836 Naval Air Squadron.

Ron said: “It was very emotional seeing the Swordfish flying over a carrier again.

“The combination of a carrier, a flypast and ceremonial sunset by the Band of HM Royal Marines was wonderful – a really memorable evening.”

Sailor statue marks site of crucial war base

WHILE much of the media attention was directed at the London commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, veterans and dignitaries also gathered in Northern Ireland for the second of three such events.

Derry/Londonderry was a crucial base for Royal Navy ships engaged in the bitter struggle against the German U-boat fleet.

The port was the most westerly safe haven for the Navy, with easy access to the North Atlantic, so at the end of 1940 the

former Ebrington Barracks was commissioned as HMS Ferret and a base providing shelter, stores, fuel and repair facilities.

At the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, it is thought that Derry/Londonderry was host to some 20,000 Royal Navy

Navy past and honour victims

TOURISTS and City workers paused momentarily as Navy personnel past and present streamed through the streets of London from their ships berthed on the Thames en route to St Paul's Cathedral, writes Heather Lane.

Hundreds of today's serving Royal Navy officers and ratings mingled with elderly blazer-clad Navy, RFA and Merchant Navy veterans on the steps outside the main entrance of Wren's

masterpiece as they filed in for the 70th Anniversary Battle of the Atlantic commemorative evensong service.

Veterans swapped stirring stories of wartime experiences seven decades ago in the much-feared struggle for sea supremacy in the grey wastes of the Atlantic.

Naval associations gathered up their brethren in clustered groups, warmly greeting and reaffirming those friendships, bonded in war, that last forever.

TV newsmen strained to spot

from afar the highly-polished bronze Atlantic Star medals standing out in the bright sunlight amongst the many rows of coloured ribbons decorating the chests of the veterans.

Swooping to interview those men, the reporters were keen to share the veterans' fading memories before it was too late.

The few veterans strong enough to attend these special events to mark their generation's suffering, scanned the crowds hopefully to spot their long-lost colleagues.

Sailor's collars whipped up in the breeze as the ramrod-straight gunnery officers barked orders to form ranks and then to line the steps to the grand staircase entrance, to guide and encourage guests to file into the great church.

Inside, seated under the vast dome, Gordon Langford's *Fantasy on British Sea Songs* and an impressive *Andante espressivo* – Elgar's organ music – provided accompaniment whilst the Navy's top brass nodded, smiled and whispered greetings to their colleagues across the aisles.

Veterans in wheelchairs, the blind and the frail were seated close by in the transepts, while foreign naval defence attachés of many of the allied nations sat diagonally opposite the city aldermen.

Dressed in crimson fur-trimmed robes, the city dignitaries awaited their Lord Mayor's arrival as the choir glided silently across the polished marble, followed by visiting clergy and the College of Canons.

From the North Door, the St Paul's Chapter escorted the Lord



Lights... carrier – action!

CARRIER HMS Illustrious was briefly converted into a TV centre when *The One Show* broadcast a programme live from the flight deck.

BBC TV's daily magazine show visited Lusty while she was berthed at Greenwich in support of the Battle of the Atlantic commemorations in London.

On Thursday May 9, 65 members of the show turned Lusty's flight deck into a temporary studio.

Despite the blustery weather, the live

broadcast went without a hitch, reaching an audience of more than four million nationwide.

Guests on board included *One Show* presenters Matt Baker and Alex Jones, who were both hits with the ship's company, as well as historian Dan Snow and comedian Eddie Izzard.

Mr Izzard remarked that he was very excited to have the opportunity to visit the ship as his own father had been in the Royal Navy for a short period after 1945.

Lusty coordinated the live broadcast whilst aircraft landed on the flight deck, as well as

hosting over 350 VIP guests at a charity event to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The carrier's Commanding Officer, Capt Martin Connell, said: “We are all delighted with the outcome.

“Sitting on a sofa on my flight deck and on live TV whilst landing helicopters definitely ranks high in the top ten of the most surreal experiences in my life.

“That everything was achieved in complete safety and to plan is testament to my team.”

● HMS Pursuer – with royal passenger – on the River Foyle



personnel, 10,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders, more than 6,000 Americans and many more from nations occupied by the Germans.

Guest of honour at the ceremonies was Prince Michael of Kent, while the Royal Navy was represented by Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral, Chris Hockley, and two ships – Sandown-class minehunter HMS Bangor and Archer-class patrol boat HMS Pursuer.

The programme began with a commemoration for the victims of HMS Laurentic, an armed merchant cruiser sunk off the coast of County Donegal, and Bangor hosted a reception for civic leaders, international representatives and veterans.

The following day, Saturday May 11, Prince Michael unveiled the ‘International Sailor Statue’ at Ebrington Square – the sailor, who is depicted carrying a kitbag with a hammock slung over his shoulder, has no national insignia as he represents all the Allied sailors who took part in the Battle.

It is a counterpart of a statue which stands in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Royal Marines Band Scotland then performed Beat Retreat, and RNA Londonderry – who played a major role in organising the programme – hosted around 450 guests for lunch.

Saturday evening saw a civic reception and gala dinner, while the following day the focal point was St Columb's Cathedral for the annual Battle of the Atlantic commemoration service.

Prince Michael took the salute at the subsequent parade to the Cenotaph, where veterans of the battle laid wreaths.

Other wreaths from Canadian naval associations were laid by Royal Canadian Sea Cadets of the Northwest Prairie cadets, who were being hosted by the British counterparts in the Portrush Sea Cadet unit.

Prince Michael then went aboard HMS Pursuer, which moved to the middle of the River Foyle to carry out the casting of wreaths on the water.



● Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets at the International Sailor Statue



● Veterans and cadets gather on the bank of the River Foyle in Derry/Londonderry

present s of battle



Mayor to his seat as the clock struck 5pm and the congregation rose across the aisles to sing the *Processional Hymn*.

With considerable pride, the standard bearers strode down the central aisle holding aloft the White, Blue and Red Ensign standards of the Naval Service, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy.

During the hymn, these were laid respectfully across the altar beside one another.

Canon Pastor the Rt Rev Michael Colclough called on the congregation to pray for the souls of those who died and to remember those whose lives were changed forever through the injury and trauma they suffered during this maritime battle.

The hymns, psalms and prayers offered throughout the evensong service followed a nautical theme.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas symbolically delivered a lesson from the Gospel of St Mark in which Jesus rebuked the wind and the sea to bring about peace and a dead calm following a great gale.

The familiar chorus of the Naval hymn, 'Oh hear us when we cry to thee, for those in peril on the sea', sent the soaring voices of the seafarers high into the gilded rafters, lifting the spirits and bringing thoughts of those sailors trapped and injured in the dark hulls of their sinking ships as the U-boats picked off their prey.

On completion of the service, the ship's companies of HMS Illustrious, Edinburgh and Blyth marched past assembled dignitaries where the First Sea Lord received the salute from the South Portico, surrounded by past Sea Lords, admirals and senior dignitaries from the City of London.

The parade marched east down St Paul's Church Yard until they reached Mansion House.

Here the sailors were invited to join a reception for numerous veterans and guests hosted by the City of London.

The Representative Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir Robert Finch, gave a stirring speech where he commended the Servicemen and women of the ships present in

London, and paid a special tribute to all British seafarers, saluting their courage and leadership, and honouring the memory of those who were lost.

"The City of London has long-cherished its deep and historic connection with the sea as the source of British strength, security and success," said Sir Robert.

"We owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to the British seafarers of 70 years ago.

"They made a critical contribution to our country and hold a very special place in British consciousness.

"If we, your beneficiaries, were together to throw a wreath into the middle of the sometimes dark, sometimes icy, brooding Atlantic it would read, as at Kohima; 'When you go home, tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow, we gave our today'."

THE arrival of a Royal Navy ship in London tends to merit media coverage these days.

So the arrival of three caused something of a stir – and sailors from the ships certainly made their presence felt around the capital as they undertook a series of ceremonial duties and visits.

All three vessels were in the capital as part of the 70th anniversary commemorations for the Battle of the Atlantic.

The five-day visit by HMS Edinburgh, the last of the Type 42 destroyers, was also part of her farewell tour of the UK after almost 30 years of service.

So as well as playing their part in the commemorative evensong



● Type 42 destroyer HMS Edinburgh (left), on her farewell tour of the UK, rafted up alongside World War 2 cruiser HMS Belfast in the Pool of London for the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary commemorations
Picture: Sgt Jez Doak (RAF)

They saw three ships come sailing in

service at St Paul's Cathedral, her sailors were also making sure that she received her fair share of time in the spotlight.

Edinburgh's arrival, particularly her passage through Tower Bridge, was watched by hundreds of people on both banks of the Thames as she glided to her berth alongside museum ship HMS Belfast, sister of Edinburgh's forebear which was sunk in the Arctic 71 years ago.

After the service at St Paul's, Edinburgh's ship's company attended a presentation of Arctic Star medals to Russian Convoy veterans on board HMS Belfast.

Berthed at HMS President, just across the river and the other side of Tower Bridge from Edinburgh,

minehunter HMS Blyth's sailors joined with their colleagues from the Type 42 for a traditional ceremony on the north bank of the Thames.

A contingent of 250 matelots – the third element from HMS Illustrious, 'parked' in mid-river further downstream – took part in the ceremony of the Constables Dues at the Tower of London.

Headed by the Royal Marines Band, Plymouth, the sailors staged the latest instalment in an historical saga stretching back to the 14th Century.

During the Middle Ages, successive Kings believed it was their right to extract tolls from vessels on the Thames.

On the King's behalf, the Constable of the Tower of London was empowered to demand these tolls as a perquisite of his office.

Past offerings have included rum, or oysters, mussels and cockles; this year, the Constable, Gen Lord Richard Dannatt, was presented with three barrels of wine, one from each vessel.

The ancient ritual began when Capt Martin Connell of HMS Illustrious led the sailors to the Tower's West Gate, where they were challenged for entry to the Tower by the Yeoman Gaoler armed with his infamous axe.

The captain and his shore party – which included the COs of HMS Edinburgh, Cdr Nick Borbone, Lt Cdr Nick Davey – then marched through the ancient fort to Tower Green, accompanied by Yeoman Warders (or Beefeaters) and a Corps of Drums to deliver the barrels of wine.

A different ceremony put two sailors centre-stage – or perhaps centre-pitch would be a better description.

The FA Cup was brought on board Illustrious to allow sailors from the carrier and Edinburgh to get a closer look at the coveted trophy, and 185 tickets

were handed over by Tickets for Troops, to be distributed between the three ships.

On the big day itself, PO Paddy Taylor and WO2 Lee Redford carried out the cup for presentation to Wigan Athletic, who triumphed at Wembley with a last-gasp goal.

Another group welcomed aboard the veteran destroyer was Reservist employers, who enjoyed a morning of briefings on the Royal Navy's capabilities and a series of demonstrations, while affiliated groups, including RNA branches, Sea Cadet units and schools, also made the most of all three ships' presence to renew their links with the Senior Service.

And Edinburgh's ship's company was also evident at a service of commemoration at the Merchant Navy memorial in Trinity Gardens on Tower Hill.

Edinburgh's galley was worked hard during the visit, with a series of VIP visits and functions ashore catered for by the Fortress of the Sea – a pattern which was to become familiar on the remainder of her UK tour, with Edinburgh (see p11) and Liverpool (as *Navy News* went to press).

Seagoing Wren recalls 'terribly smelly' U-boat

AMONG the veterans who attended the Anniversary Service at St Paul's Cathedral were former Wren Writer Megan Moir and AB Ken Barratt.

Seven decades ago Megan was one of only two women to serve at sea as part of the anti-U-boat warfare team training Allied escort warships.

Wearing her own wartime medals and her late husband's set on her jacket, Megan said: "I thought the Service was absolutely wonderful.

"I was very moved by the whole event. Although I hoped I might see someone I knew from that time, sadly I didn't recognise anyone."

Megan served in HMY Philante, a vessel loaned to the Royal Navy

by the millionaire yachtsman and aviation pioneer Tommy Sopwith.

The motor yacht was the floating HQ for 20 officers and 120 ratings, and was often tasked to act as a merchant ship during the warships' convoy exercises based out of Larne in Northern Ireland before it was deemed too dangerous to continue at that location once their operations were detected by the enemy.

Megan said: "The anti-U-boat training areas moved to the Kyle of Lochalsh at the rush one day.

"I was ordered to hurry to the Wrennery to gather some spare clothes, it was such an urgent move.

"A telegraph was sent to the WRNS HQ to request special permission for me to leave with the all-male ship's company on the Philante because my Wren colleague was away on leave – we weren't supposed to go to sea without at least one other female present.

"However, we couldn't wait for the response and we sailed straight away up to Scotland."

After her ground-breaking role on board Philante as the shorthand Writer, recording the progress of vital exercises, Megan demobbed from the WRNS in 1946 and married Merchant Navy sailor Douglas, who had sailed in numerous convoys and seen some terrible sights – ships sunk and souls left to their fate in the sea.

At the end of the war, HMY Philante headed up to Loch Eriboll to where the U-boats had surrendered.

Later on, Megan went on board one of the U-boats to have a look at their living quarters and also received £4 of the ship's company's prize money for

capturing the U-boats, which was a tidy sum in those days.

"The U-boat was terribly smelly down below although I do remember that the German submariners were quite good looking!" she said.

"My Wren colleague and I had a small swastika flag that we tore in two and kept one half each, but when my husband saw it he threw it on the fire in disgust because of the tormented images he'd witnessed at sea – the legacy of the German U-boats."

Megan's parents kept the wartime letters that she sent home to her parents so she was able to record her memoirs of the time and send these to the Royal Navy Museum for historical record.

"I will be marching with the veterans at Liverpool Cathedral too and I've got a front row seat along with my daughter Sally and her husband for the 70th Anniversary commemorative Service at the end of May," she said.

Former AB Ken Barratt was accompanied by his guide communicator, Mrs Janice Elliott, who described what was happening around him at the Service and City of London reception at Mansion House – Ken is a blind veteran who joined the Royal Navy at Collingwood in 1942.

He went on to serve on numerous convoys all over the world, on HM ships Canton, Chameleon, Tobermory, and the Algerine-class minesweeper Vestal.

He was on board an escort vessel for a floating dock and went down to Simons Town in South Africa and from Freetown to Bombay.



● Veterans climb the steps of St Paul's Cathedral before the Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary commemorative evensong service
Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas reads a lesson during the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary commemorative evensong service in St Paul's Cathedral
Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum

Changing the guard

WHAT more appropriate conditions for a monarch's first fleet review than Queen's Weather?

June 15 1953 had dawned dull, with the promise of wet weather for the big day.

But by just after 3pm, when Royal Yacht HMS Surprise – normally the despatch vessel of the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Fleet – emerged from the mouth of Portsmouth Harbour things were looking a lot brighter.

White clouds scudded across a blue sky and a stiff breeze, combined with the opposing tide to jostle the host of ships which had gathered at Spithead for the Coronation Review, held less than a fortnight after the young Queen Elizabeth was crowned at Westminster Abbey.

And a host it was – far too numerous for spectators on the mainland or the Isle of Wight to enumerate from their various vantage points, though had they been able they would have counted just over 280 vessels from aircraft carriers to lifeboats.

An anchorage of 25 square miles had been delineated for the review, within which were nine lines of varying length, the longest being seven miles, stretching from No Man's Land Fort to the River Medina.

Five lines comprised warships, liners, cargo ships, tankers, dockyard vessels, fishing boats, ferries and other craft which represented British maritime activity.

HMS Surprise, the new Queen's host for the day, had been specially converted for the role, with a podium erected on B gun deck just forward of the bridge.

The converted Bay-class frigate

(originally laid down as part of the Loch class) stood in as Royal Yacht because Britannia had been launched in Scotland just weeks before the review, and the Victoria and Albert III had been decommissioned before the war.

Flying the Union Jack at the bows, the admiralty flag at the foremast, the Royal Standard at the main top, the Union Flag at the gaff for an Admiral of the Fleet, and the White Ensign at the stern, Surprise was followed by a flotilla of ships towards the review fleet, including HMS Redpole, HMS Starling – Capt Johnnie Walker's flagship in the Battle of the Atlantic – HMS Fleetwood, HMS Helmsdale, ocean liners SS Orcades, SS Pretoria Castle and SS Strathnaver, with Isle of Wight ferries MV Brading and MV Southsea bringing up the rear.

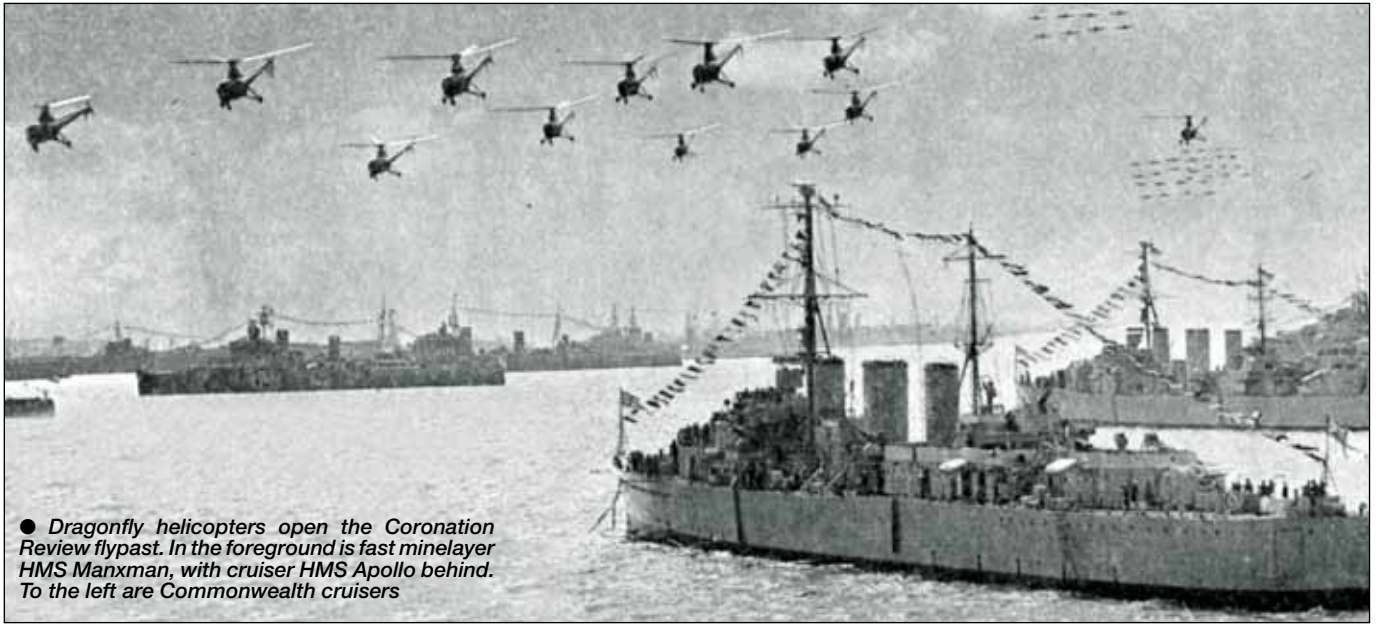
At 3.30pm a gun salute from the assembled warships thundered across the Solent, and the Queen began to review the ships – 197 Royal Navy, 13 ships of Commonwealth navies, 16 foreign navies, 51 merchant ships and auxiliaries and four RNLI lifeboats.

The 1953 review, as with many earlier gatherings, saw the Royal Navy in a state of flux.

A century earlier, at the review of 1853 on the eve of the Crimean War, one of the main talking points was the 121-gun HMS Duke of Wellington, the first screw-driven line of battleship.

A further review just three years later, marking the end of the Crimean War, saw all ships of the line bar three driven by screws, and the first ironclads put in an appearance.

Fast forward to the New Elizabethan Age, and the waxing and waning of naval policy was there for all to see.



● Dragonfly helicopters open the Coronation Review flypast. In the foreground is fast minelayer HMS Manxman, with cruiser HMS Apollo behind. To the left are Commonwealth cruisers

Instead of the 59 battleships of 1914 and the 11 of 1937, there was just the one – the magnificent HMS Vanguard.

Close to her at the eastern end of Line F was one of the two biggest aircraft carriers the Royal Navy had built – the 47,000-ton HMS Eagle, less than two years in commission, and one of ten or more carriers riding at anchor.

The cruisers and escort destroyers of the war were also facing an uncertain future as the increasing number of frigates and minehunters reflected the Admiralty's increasing recognition of the future threat to the world's sea lanes posed by submarines and mines.

The potency of air power was reinforced by a flypast of 350 aircraft, led by squadrons of ponderous helicopters and finished off with the roar of jet fighters.

The various squadrons lurched or punched into view through a bank of heavy cloud and rain on the western horizon, making station-keeping in the formations a tricky task.

One observer, reporting in *The Navy* magazine, considered the flypast to be "perhaps the least encouraging and enjoyable moment" of the day.

"One was left with an impression of first-class pilots flying fussy, outdated aeroplanes, with their noses put sadly out of joint by the Attackers, Sea Hawks, and Sea Venoms which, in very small numbers, brought up the rear," said 'T. E.'

"The bulk of the 'planes must inevitably compare unfavourably

with the 30-minute flypast of the RAF at Odiham.

"One realises, of course, that such aeroplanes as the Firefly and the Gannet, if they are to fulfil their purpose, must of necessity be able to fly slowly, but it brought home, more than ever, the need to fight for the speedy re-equipment of the Fleet Air Arm with the newest and most efficient types of aircraft."

When darkness fell the viewing public were treated to a barrage of 2,000 rockets from the review fleet, though again *The Navy* could

not refrain from harking back to earlier days: "The illuminations were not as good as on former occasions.

"One missed the searchlight display – radar has now replaced the projectors..." though the correspondent admitted that the simultaneous light-up and black-out was "most impressive."

■ Pictures and accounts from the July 1953 edition of *The Navy* magazine, the official publication of the Navy League, forerunner of the Marine Society.



● HMS Surprise and her train pass along the bows of the aircraft carriers at the 1953 review. In the centre, from foreground, is the USS Baltimore, then Montcalm (France), Sverdlov (USSR), Gota Lejon (Sweden), Miguel de Cervantes (Spain), Almirante Barroso (Brazil) and Tromp (Netherlands). The carriers include HM ships Eagle, Indomitable, Indefatigable, Illustrious, Theseus, HMCS Magnificent, HMAS Sydney and HMS Perseus



● Royal Yacht HMS Surprise passes the bows of two Daring-class destroyers

Celebration and conflagration

IN 1953 Brian Baguley was serving as an Electrical Artificer in HMS Ranpura, based at Malta.

In late April, said Brian, most of the Mediterranean Fleet went home to take part in the Coronation Review.

"Shortly afterwards, the Egyptians under General Neguib started making noises about taking over the Suez Canal," he said.

"It was decided that something ought to be done about this, so HMS Ranpura, as the only large ship available, was loaded up with a Royal Marines Commando unit and all their equipment.

"There were also various extra naval personnel embarked who would be capable of operating canal facilities, if necessary.

"Ranpura was an ex-wartime Armed Merchant Cruiser which had been refitted as a Fleet Repair Ship.

"Her repair capabilities were excellent, but her motive power was a bit lacking, comprising twin steam reciprocating engines.

"One shaft was a bit dodgy, and we trundled down to Suez at the stately speed of ten knots or so.

"On arrival at Port Said we secured stern-to the jetty at Navy House, adjacent to the Canal Company offices.

"The Royal Marines were disembarked and we settled down to await events.

"Nothing much happened so, as the great day of the Coronation approached, the repair staff set to work and built a large three-dimensional crown.

"This was lined with coloured bunting, outlined with electric lights and mounted on top of the bridge.

"Then a large plate, embellished with the Royal Cipher EII R, also outlined with lights, was mounted on the front of the bridge.



"These looked quite impressive and I took some photographs at the time (including the one printed above).

"The lights round the ship's side were anti-sabotage, to detect possible frogmen attacks.

"Coronation Day dawned – it was to be Sunday Routine.

"I went down to the workshop anticipating Secure at 0900. At about 0840, the unexpected pipe came: 'Hands to emergency stations.'

"My first reaction was, 'What daft so-and-so is having an exercise now?'

"Then I realised the words 'For Exercise' had not been included and dashed back aft to my station in the main switchboard.

"Passing the entrance to the For'd Boiler Room on the way, I

noticed hoses snaking everywhere and Commander (E) in oil-spattered whites.

"Apparently, when changing over sprayers, some unfortunate stoker had dropped the flaming torch in the bilges, where a mixture of oil and water ignited and the compartment went up in flames.

"After about an hour or so the flames were extinguished, by which time the furnace fuel oil in the wing tanks was bubbling nicely.

"An attempt was made to transfer it to a cooler storage, but the cross-connecting pipes had been distorted by the fire and hot oil sprayed onto the red-hot plates causing renewed conflagration.

"Eventually the fire was doused and we stood down from Emergency Stations and went to

dinner.

"In the afternoon I was one of those who had to go down and assess the damage.

"The forced-draught fans were electrically-driven and the big old motors had survived pretty well.

"All the electric wiring and most of the fittings were destroyed.

"It took three weeks working round-the-clock to make the Boiler Room operational again.

"Recreational trips to the beach over in Port Fuad helped to ease the pain, plus cold beer in the canteen ashore.

"No more excitement after that, so we re-embarked the Royal Marines in July, weighed and proceeded back to Malta.

"Then we settled back into our billet in Lazaretto Creek alongside Manoel Island."



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● Queen Elizabeth in her dock at Rosyth

Forth dimensions

THE bank of the River Forth, near North Queensferry, is a good spot from which to view an iconic piece of British engineering, writes Mike Gray.

Although impressive from a distance, the scale of the gigantic steel structure, in its protective coat of red paint, can only really be appreciated when you are on it. And from your lofty vantage point, perhaps atop the bridge itself, you can see another marvel of man's ingenuity – the Forth Railway Bridge.

The engineering wonder we are concerned with here is the building of aircraft carrier Queen Elizabeth – the biggest engineering project currently being undertaken in the UK, and arguably in Europe.

Superlatives abound when talking of the first of class and her sister ship, the Prince of Wales.

They will be the largest ships ever built for the Royal Navy, and utilise state-of-the-art technology.

But the complexity of the class lies in their size, not their weaponry; the punch is delivered by embarked aircraft, while the Type 45 destroyer – on which some of the QE-class technology has been tried and tested – is a more challenging project as the ship and weapons systems are far more closely integrated.

They are being pieced together with the help of one of Europe's largest gantry cranes, the 1,000-tonne capacity Goliath, fabricated

in China specifically for this task.

And the 65,000-tonne ships will be driven by the most powerful marine gas turbines in the world – each vessel has two 36-megawatt (around 50,000 horsepower) MT30s, providing two-thirds of the 109 megawatts they require – which is enough energy to power a town the size of Swindon.

The remaining power comes from four diesel generators, all feeding into an electric propulsion system.

The carriers are designed for a speed in excess of 25 knots, and can accommodate a maximum of 1,600 people when the tailored air group is embarked; each ship can accommodate up to 40 aircraft.

Two aircraft lifts are designed to each move two Joint Strike Fighters, or one Chinook, rapidly between the eight-acre flight deck and the spacious hangar below; between them the lifts are powerful enough to shift the entire ship's company in one go.

But as PO Neil Dixon, one of the members of the fledgling ship's company, observed: "When you sit at your desk you can read all the statistics you want.

"You can tell someone the flight deck is 70 metres wide, but it is only when you stand up here and look across that you realise 70 metres is pretty wide.

"It is only when you stand up here that you really get it."

PO Dixon is one of the small team involved in the lengthy testing and commissioning



programme – ventilation and air conditioning being his particular part of the ship.

They work in a modern office suite a couple of minutes walk away from the dry dock where the final pieces (including the last elements of the flight deck) are being added to the carrier, which was built using large blocks fabricated around the country and shipped to the Babcock yard at Rosyth, the site of the former royal dockyard.

Scattered slightly further afield are bits and pieces of the Prince of Wales, which will be assembled once the Queen Elizabeth has been towed from a flooded-up dock for fitting out.

The carriers are being built by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, a partnership between the MOD, BAE Systems, Babcock and Thales UK, and although they will sail under the White Ensign they will be 'defence assets', to be used by all three Services.

Acting as floating outposts of sovereign UK territory, each of the carriers will be able to cover 66 per cent of the globe in 14 days, and their influence will be widely felt – 150 nations have coastlines, 70 per cent of the world's population lives within 100 miles of the sea, and four-fifths of the world's cities lie within 200 miles of a coast.

The Royal Navy team has seen a steady – and increasing – stream of VIP visitors in recent weeks, including the Prime Minister, the former and current First Sea Lords and the Defence Secretary.

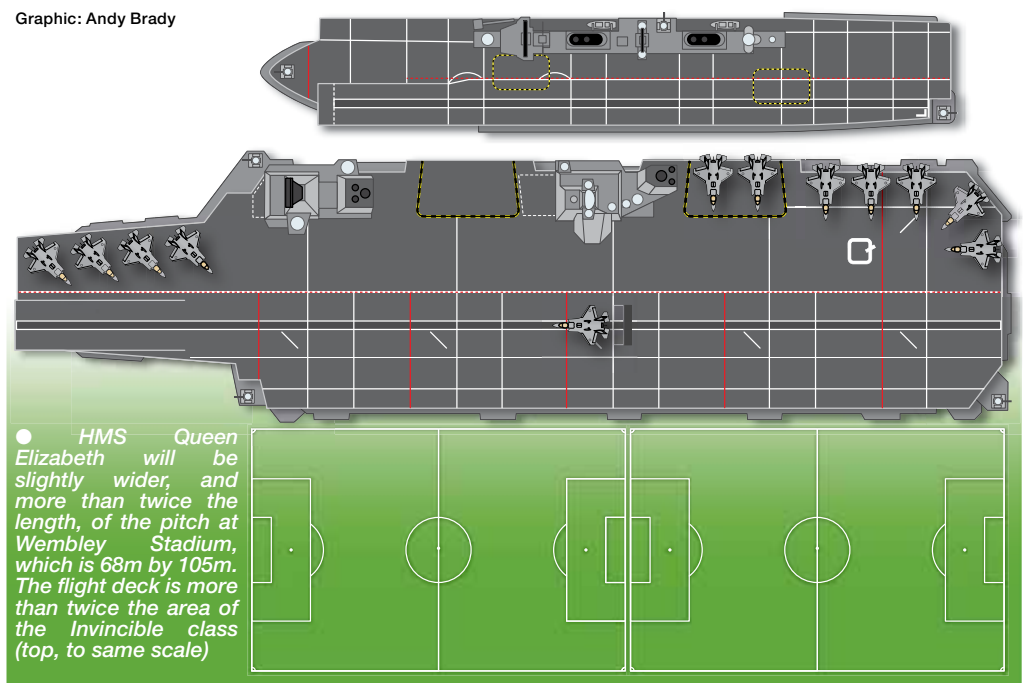
Those visitors will have been struck by the scale of the project – from keel to mast the carrier is comfortably taller than Nelson's Column – and by the bustle of activity around and within the hull.

Workers troop on and off the ship using large scaffold towers, and the flight deck and hangar are littered with portable cabins, ISO containers, fork-lift trucks and various pieces of industrial equipment, which somewhat obscure the size of the spaces and areas.

Ducts, pipes and cables snake from deckheads and panels, while swathes of plastic sheeting protect walls, doors and hatches.

Modular prefabricated cabins, accommodating between two and eight people, have been installed –

Graphic: Andy Brady



the ship will have 500 cabins.

And deep shafts will soon house lifts which are an integral part of the 'Highly-Mechanised Weapon Handling System', by which a handful of operators can deliver weapons from magazines to aircraft in a fraction of the time it took on the Invincible-class ships.

Gaping holes in the undersides of sponsons indicate the places where ship's boats can be lowered directly into the sea, so great is the overhang of the flight deck; a set of steps above the propellers in the stern point to the place where passengers will disembark.

Yet another yawning chasm will house a particularly welcome piece of kit – a double-door lift

which opens out to the galleys, stores, cool store and freezers.

The sight of human chains storing ship, passing boxes and crates hand to hand from the jetty, will be replaced by pallets being whisked around on trolleys.

The Ops Room is, like the rest of the ship, still a work in progress, but red lines on the empty deck mark the spaces allocated for banks of computers.

At the heart is the captain's chair facing large plasma screens, and around him will be areas for the various departments, including weapons and air operations.

Cables in ducting will provide a flexible option for upgrades – no more ripping out miles of bespoke

wiring in an approach which should allow more capable hardware to be much more simply plugged into the carrier's IT network.

And while the technology on the carriers is impressive, it has also been designed with people in mind; a dedicated room for a quiet break or hot drink just off the Ops Room, avoiding the need for a long trek to wardroom or mess, is indicative of the thought that has gone into the layout.

And these examples of New Elizabethan industry are being built to last, possibly up to half a century – not, admittedly, quite as enduring as the paragon of Victorian engineering just a couple of miles downstream.



● The aft island – Upper Block 14 – of Queen Elizabeth is rolled out of Scotstoun on the Clyde last month Pictures: Aircraft Carrier Alliance





● A rare colour shot of a Wessex at Nanga Ga'at in the mid-60s and (below) 42 Commando veteran Cyril Goodhand stands in front of a roll of honour with a Malay survivor of the campaign

Present-day images: PO(Phot) Gaz Armes, FRPU East



● Lt Nick Charleston chats with a mother and her child in the hospital at Nanga Ga'at while (below) AET Lee Catelani adds a fresh lick of paint to one of the town's schools



● (Below, l-r) Families greet their guests in a traditional longhouse; 845's senior pilot uses a tribal blade to cut down gifts; and some of the 17-strong party pose atop Mount Kinabalu



RETURN TO THE BIRTH OF THE JUNGLE LEGEND

IN A small clearing by the banks of the muddy Baleh River, Lt Aaron Cross bows his head in reverence to his forebears.

This is where the legend of the Junglies was born: Nanga Ga'at, 80 miles inland, in the heart of Borneo.

Five decades ago, Naval aviators flew countless missions over the Malaysian jungle in a bitter and oft-forgotten struggle to prevent communist forces from Indonesia overrunning this region.

Those helicopter pioneers were the forerunners of today's Commando Helicopter Force – and 17 present-day members of that force joined veterans for a 12-day tour of Borneo, 50 years after the first Junglies flew in.

Back in 1963, 845 Naval Air Squadron established a forward base at Nanga Ga'at in the Sarawak province, and flew from there for several years, operating from a base which is today used by a logging company.

To explain what the airfield was like back in the '60s, former Junglie pilots Lts Neil Burns-Thomson and Mike Thompson were on hand; both are now in their 70s – and both survived crashes; Mike was the sole survivor when a Wessex went down over the jungle as he returned to camp, while Neil and his crew were more fortunate when their Whirlwind came down in 1965.

“There were six of us onboard at the time and we all survived, and that is why the indigenous Iban people named me ‘Antu Gayo Ulu Mirana’ – Long-lived Spirit of the

River,” he told today's generation of Junglies gathered around a memorial to crew and passengers on two Wessex lost in 1965.

“It was very moving, very emotional because the names on the memorial stone belonged to good friends and colleagues of mine. We served together.”

The helicopters collided and plunged into the river, killing all 24 souls aboard the two aircraft – an horrific crash witnessed by Alex Linggi, today a Malaysian MP.

He invited the Junglies into his home and told them that the government had just pledged to spend a further £2,000 for its continued upkeep.

“Your visit is significant because this year Sarawak is celebrating the 50th anniversary of Malaysia,” Mr Linggi told his guests.

“Words are not enough to describe how much 845 Naval Air Squadron has done for us in Kapit and Sarawak.”

Also on hand to describe what fighting in the jungle was like was Cyril Goodhand, who served with 42 Commando during the fight against the insurgency.

“For seasoned and less experienced personnel it was marvellous to have the veterans along. Each added a dimension to the visit and revealed personal insights into the squadron's ‘Junglie’ heritage and the immense contribution also made by the Royal Marines during the conflict,” said Maj Mark Johnson RM, 845 NAS' senior pilot.

The ceremony at Nanga Ga'at wasn't the only one act of remembrance today's 845 NAS visitors took part in. Among the signature moments in the 1960s campaign was the Limbang Raid, when Royal Marines from 42 Commando came ashore to free hostages – including the British representative and his family – seized by rebels.

The raid was successful with all hostages released unhurt, but five Royal Marines lost their lives. Maj Johnson laid a wreath on behalf of his squadron, plus the ‘Junglie’ Association and the FAA Memorial Church at the memorial in Limbang town which was dedicated to those who died.

Borneo is renowned for the hospitality of its people and after a visit to a local school, where the team helped renovate a classroom, they were invited to a local longhouse.

Each house accommodates 50 families and the welcome ceremony required all assembled visitors to meet each family member.

“To witness many generations living together so harmoniously was an inspirational experience for the visitors and it was very apparent how much the Iban people appreciated the work of the British during the conflict,” said Maj Johnson.

The sailors, airmen, and veterans were honoured guests at a welcome feast: a wild boar was killed in honour of the occasion and was washed down with

copious amounts of the local ‘home brew’ or Tuac.

Traditional Sarawak songs followed in which the Ibans praised the strength of the veterans on the battlefield and the visit to their country. Maj Johnson took part in a ritual involving the cutting down of gifts with a Parang – a traditional tribal blade used as a weapon and tool by the Iban people.

The following day the 845 team visited the local hospital where they were invited to talk with the children and their parents on the paediatric ward, while Lt Fred Durrant explained the work of 845's medics and how they treat casualties on the modern battlefield.

Although the visit to Malaysia was focused on gaining first-hand knowledge of the squadron's history, there was some down time for adventurous training.

Some of the Junglies headed to Sibu marine national park for scuba diving alongside blue spotted rays, turtles, barracuda, and sting rays.

The remainder of the group took two days out to climb Mount Kinabalu with the help of local guides. They quickly realised they had somewhat underestimated the arduous task that lay ahead. After hours of yomping they arrived at base camp with aching legs and feet. The following day was an early morning start and the team finally arrived at the sun rose over the 4,095m (13,435ft) peak.

And with that, the return to the jungle was all but over. It was, says Maj Johnson, “truly an incredible journey”.





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LEADING MEN



A ROYAL Marines Commando advances into swirling smoke on the Sennybridge ranges in Wales – and 11 weeks of training for men who would become the new breed of junior leaders reaches its climax.

Eight days and seven nights carrying out reconnaissance patrols, raids and all-out assaults on villages serve as the finale of the Junior Command Course, which determines which green berets will be the corporals of tomorrow.

The course – run by the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, near Exeter, and spread across Devon and Wales – is regarded as among the toughest a marine will face throughout his career, preparing him for the leap from marine to corporal.

Each year the Corps requires between 250 and 300 new corporals – all of whom will be expected to lead marines in action, marines whose lives are in their hands, a tremendous responsibility for men often in their early twenties.

To meet that demand for fresh blood, units across the Corps look at the men under their wing and put the names of the best marines forward for consideration, irrespective of their specialisation: chef, signaller, physical training instructor. You're a Royal Marine first – expected to run, shoot, read maps.

Four times a year, these candidates arrive at Lympstone, ready for two and a half months of instruction and assessment.

"Not everyone has inherent leadership ability," explains Maj Ben Reynolds, who runs the course. "Corporals need to be confident in their ability to stand in front of people and take charge – but they also need to be convincing when they do so, otherwise they will not be respected."

He and his instructors look at an individual marine's skill, his ability to deliver lectures, pass on orders, advice and instructions to his men, his command and leadership

abilities and finally his personal qualities – "determination, courage, appearance and bearing, and cheerfulness in the face of adversity," says Maj Reynolds.

After a 'simple' pass or fail test on the first day – a four-mile speed march carrying an SA80 rifle and 21lbs of kit inside 40 minutes – the remainder of the opening eight days of the course are set aside for the budding corporals to revise.

Instructors go back to basics to assess the candidates' commando skills such as living in the field, military experience and especially navigation, such as finding your way across ten or 14km of Dartmoor or Branton Burrows in North Devon by night carrying equipment.

The tufted dunes at Branton are also used extensively for a week of section attacks – as many as eight a day to hone the trainees' skills, followed by night time navigation exercises.

Personal strength and endurance is tested with the gruelling log run: a five-mile slog around Woodbury Common as eight men haul a telegraph pole – generally regarded as one of the toughest physical challenges in the Corps.

The course twice makes use of the ranges at Sennybridge, in the Brecon Beacons north of Merthyr Tydfil: firstly for assessing the ability to lead a patrol, planning, issuing orders for and finally carrying out that mission – often at night; and the second time for that final assessment.

"The patrol exercise is six days long," explains C/Sgt Anthony Wilson, the course's chief instructor. "Each marine has to prepare and deliver a set of orders, then carry out the action – and then he has six hours to produce a patrol report. By the time he's finished, he'll have about 30 minutes before the next guy gets his task."

"That goes on for six days – belt fed. They get at most an hour's sleep a day."

In between the two spells at Sennybridge, the trainees are taken to the Caerwent training area near Chepstow – an old armaments depot, which now is used to teach troops the art of setting up vehicle check points and urban combat ... and is also heavily used by TV (*Doctor Who* spin-off *Torchwood*) and Hollywood (*Captain America*).

For added realism, the candidates are given 'simunition' – simulated ammunition, similar to paintball but fired through normal weapons – and real foes as they master Operations in Built-Up Areas (previously known as FIBUA – Fighting In Built-Up Areas – or, by the lads, as FISHing – Fighting In Someone's House). It's about as tough as modern warfare gets – it favours the defender. Just ask the defenders of Stalingrad, Breslau, Hué...

Throughout the field exercises, the would-be corporals run through scenarios again and again, there's little down time, and invariably little sleep either.

At Sennybridge, for example, explains instructor Sgt Alex Heath, "the course do a ten-kilometre march and then they have a six-hour stand down to get some forced rest. This is plenty of time!"

By the time of the final exercise – deliberate attacks, ambushes, urban assaults, reconnaissance patrols – instructors have a good idea who will pass the course. "It's mainly for confirmation," says C/Sgt Wilson. "We already know who the strong ones are."

Those who come through return to Lympstone for the passing out parade and promotion.

"Those intending on continuing their career have the prospect of passing the Senior Command Course to become a sergeant – and yes, it's equally hard and also starts with a four-mile speed march," WO2 Richard White points out.



In the footsteps of Shackleton

ALMOST engulfed by rough seas off South Georgia, 21st-Century adventurers are close to their goal of becoming the first people in 100 years to follow in the footsteps of Britain's greatest Antarctic explorer.

Six men – including Royal Marines commando WO2 Baz Gray and 815 Naval Air Squadron senior rating PO Seb Coulthard, pictured inset atop a rock on the shore of Elephant Island – set out to recreate the legendary rescue mission by Sir Ernest Shackleton, sailing across 800 miles of violent ocean before crossing 20 miles of rugged South Georgia to reach the former whaling station at Stromness.

In 1916, Sir Ernest took his whaler, the James Caird, from Elephant Island to South Georgia and struggled across the mountains to raise the alarm after his Trans-Antarctic expedition became stranded when its ship, the Endurance, was crushed by the ice.

In the 97 years since, no-one has successfully recreated the entire rescue mission until now – and using only the clothing and equipment available to Shackleton's men.

A replica of the James Caird was built and named in honour of the 2013 expedition patron, Shackleton's granddaughter Alexandra, then, after nearly five years of planning, transported to Elephant Island.

From there, expedition leader Tim Jarvis, skipper Nick Bubbs, navigator Paul Larsen, cameraman Ed Wardle, with Baz as the seasoned mountaineer and Seb as bosun, set out through large chunks of ice and made it to open waters.

Space inside the boat was no larger than a double bed with around three feet for head room – no-one could move around on board without disturbing one of his shipmates, which meant for the entire journey to South Georgia the sailors got no more than an hour's sleep at a time.

Food was cooked on a restored 100-year-old Primus stove which then had a large pot placed on top of it – but in rough seas cooking was almost impossible.

Waves crashed over the side of the boat which meant the men's woollen clothing was always “nice and damp,” says Baz.

By the third night of the voyage, the Atlantic was throwing 50ft seas and 60kt winds against the small boat, while Paul and Nick used historic navigational methods to guide the Alexandra Shackleton towards South Georgia.

“It is testament to their efforts that we achieved the level of accuracy and course we did, it was no easy feat and was considered an almost insurmountable task in 1916,” said Baz.

“The journey continued – always hungry, tired

and damp with the occasional still period of weather to get some form of respite before the next rough weather system smashed us again.”

After 13 days at sea, the adventurers reached King Haakon Bay and landed at Peggotty Bluff on the northwest shore of South Georgia (pictured below) – just like the explorers of 1916.

From there, Shackleton's party faced a 20-mile trek across the central spine of the island... but they didn't have Baz Gray to guide them.

Only he and Tim were to make the journey to Stromness – site of a now-abandoned whaling station – with authentic clothing and equipment consisting of woollen clothes, old leather boots (with screws driven through the soles for grip on the ice), a thin windproof outer layer, 50 metres of old manila rope, and a prismatic compass.

They faced glaciers and slopes prone to avalanches, a high risk of falling into crevasses – which meant the climbers were roped together all the time.

Paul Larsen joined the crossing party wearing modern gear and carrying present-day equipment as a back-up in the event of an emergency – the authorities on South Georgia would not allow the team to cross the mountains without something in place.

The three remaining members of the team suffered bad trench foot injuries, resulting in severely swollen feet, which meant they could not assail the peaks of South Georgia in 20th or 21st-Century kit.

But, as Baz said, “the show must go on”. So after waiting for a weather window after four days of high winds, the fit members of the party set off.

“It was an amazing feeling to be so remote with such little equipment – we genuinely were able to take ourselves

back, to see exactly what they saw, feeling not too dissimilar,” said the Royal Marine.

“After a pretty much non-stop 24-hour slog we pulled our very tired bodies into a very emotional Stromness harbour and were now the first team to do both parts of the historic survival journey – and as close as we could to the manner in which they did it.”

The Shackleton Epic expedition ended, fittingly, in Grytviken, the island's capital. The modern-day adventurers stood at the grave of Sir Ernest and toasted his memory in the presence of his granddaughter.

“It was,” says the green beret, “a truly fitting way to end this expedition and one we will never forget.”

A documentary of the expedition is due to be shown in September and around the same time a book charting the six men's exploits is to be published.



Marines honour Telic fallen

A BUGLER sounds the *Last Post* in the shadow of Jennycliff near Plymouth as Royal Marines and sailors honour the 11 commandos killed a decade ago in Iraq.

Three landing craft and one raiding craft linked up outside Plymouth Sound to pay tribute – in particular to one of their own, Mne Chris Maddison, who was fatally wounded ten days into Operation Telic.

On March 30 2003 a boat group of two landing craft and inshore raiding craft were scouring the marshes and reed beds southeast of Az Aubayr in southern Iraq in search of enemy activity.

As Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel November One edged cautiously into the main waterway to assess the situation, the craft was hit simultaneously by small arms fire and an anti-tank missile.

The three crew in the wheelhouse were all injured – two men were knocked unconscious while 24-year-old Mne Maddison suffered injuries from which he subsequently died in a field hospital. Two further crewmen in the well deck were blown into the water by the blast and a corporal suffered extensive cuts to his face from shrapnel.

November One was subsequently renamed November Mike in Mne Maddison's honour and each year both 9 Assault Squadron Royal Marines and HMS Ocean, the green beret's two parent units, hold a November Mike Memorial Day to not just

remember Chris, but celebrate his life.

With Ocean undergoing a lengthy refit and 9 ASRM temporarily disbanded while she is, this year the tradition was upheld by the wider landing craft community, plus some of the Mighty O's command staff – for however busy the programme, it will always remember its fallen.

So men and women from Ocean, Bulwark, 1 Assault Group Royal Marines, 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines, 6 Ops Squadron, 10 Training Squadron, 11 (ATT) Squadron and 539 ASRM gathered around the lowered ramp of the large Landing Craft Utility in Jennycliff Bay.

The Rev Scott Shackleton, 3 Commando Brigade's padre conducted the service, using the trusted Bible which he has carried from Iraq to Afghanistan and many places in between.

Rev Shackleton shared his experiences of Operation Telic with 539 ASRM and gave a moving service.

After the *Reveille* was called, 11 miniature roses – representing the 11 Royal Marines killed in action during the 2003 campaign – were cast into the sea over the craft's ramp by friends of Mne Maddison.

The next element of 'November Mike Day' will be a rugby match: Devonport Services (Chris's old team) against an LC Barbarians team at the Rectory in Plymouth; the date will be publicised in due course.

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson, HMS Bulwark



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THE ENEMY BELOW

CONTACT bearing two-four-zero degrees, seven thousand yards.

AB 'Nobby' Clarke stares at a rather-antiquated-looking green and black display at a series of tiny dots, then glances over at a second monitor which gives a sonar image of his contact – a series of spikes akin to a 3D bar chart.

Classification: Possible sub.
The shrill blast of a whistle.
Submarine radio mast, bearing zero-four-zero degrees, four miles.

HMS Westminster's electronic sensors have picked up the boat transmitting.

And there's still a third submarine to find as the frigate leads a formation of half a dozen warships through the narrow waters separating the Mull of Kintyre with Northern Ireland.

It's what Westminster's good at. Indeed, there's none better in the RN – she is the submarine hunter of choice.

But these are not waters of her choosing.

She can't unleash her main anti-submarine weapon; her Merlin helicopter is away being revamped.

She can't put her main sensor – her mile-long towed array sonar – in these restricted waters.

It is, her commanding officer Capt Hugh Beard observes, "like fighting with your arms tied behind your back".

To prove his point, a succession of green smoke grenades pepper the water's surface – signalling that one of the boats has got a torpedo away... long before the escorts had even located them.



SEVENTY years ago this spring the balance in the eternal struggle between tipped inexorably in favour of the surface escorts and the U-boat menace was defeated. But what if Britain's maritime lifeline were threatened in 2013. Who holds the balance of power? Who is the hunter – and the hunted.

RICHARD HARGREAVES joined HMS Westminster in The Minches to find out as she grappled with diesel and nuclear submarines.

One after another the escorts and the escorted have been picked off.

Advantage: submarine.

But what about on a level playing field?

What if submarine and convoy did battle in the grey wastes of the mid-Atlantic as they did 70 years ago – but with the technology of 2013? What if, we re-fought the Battle of the Atlantic?

Well, a few basics remain the same. Britain remains reliant on her sea lanes for food, energy, commercial goods.

Strangle those lanes and you strangle Britain.

"The fundamentals have not changed since the war: protect the important shipping whether it's merchantmen or an aircraft carrier," explains Lt Cdr Toby Waite, Westminster's executive officer and an anti-submarine warfare specialist.

"But the way we protect has changed. Our technology has improved, but so too has the submarine's."

Indeed for the past 70 years there has been this deadly game of cat and mouse. Sometimes the escorts have the technological advantage – such as in May 1943. Sometimes the submarines hold the winning cards – such as the advent of

nuclear-powered boats in the 1950s.

Right now?

Probably the submarine. Submariners think so. So too their foes.

"Submarines will always find their way through," says Lt Cdr Nick Pomfrett, the submarine staff officer for Joint Warrior.

His counterpart on the surface side, Lt Cdr Joe Price, concurs. "The submarine will always have the advantage. It has the element of surprise and that's the most important thing in warfare."

Westminster's operations room manager CPO Graeme Stroud adds: "The biggest thing remains finding a submarine – and a submarine remains hard to find."

If this all sounds a bit gloomy – a sort of echo of premier Stanley Baldwin's stark 1930s prophecy that "the bomber will always get through" – well, it's not an entirely one-sided battle, especially not on the submarine hunter of choice.

Like many Type 23 frigates, Westminster is equipped with Sonar 2087, towed behind the ship to listen for anything suspicious. And, under normal circumstances, she has a Merlin. Speak to anyone in the (anti) submarine warfare business and

they'll tell you the combination of the sonar and the helicopter is as good as it gets.

Westminster is also home to the Captain Anti-Submarine Warfare, currently Capt Beard – the third officer to hold the post. The third *submariner* to hold the post. *Send a thief to catch a thief.* It worked in the Battle of the Atlantic when the Admiralty put WW1 submariner Max Horton in charge of Western Approaches.

But it goes beyond handing the reins to an ex-submariner. Capt Beard wants the submarine community to understand the frigate world and *vice versa*.

So frigates are now 'affiliated' with a submarine, such as Sutherland and Tireless, with crews encouraged to trade places and share their experiences. They are encouraged to train together. The more you understand your opponent, the better able you are to defeat him.

"It's a no-brainer," says Capt Beard. "It's vital to bring the community together – the Merlin squadrons, the Type 23s, the submarines."

"Counter-piracy and counter-terrorism have very much been the Navy's main themes – and I understand why. I think we could – and should – do more anti-submarine warfare. This is something we don't practise enough."

It's something which Westminster and her sisters were built for in the latter days of the Cold War – indeed there are reminders all over the ship of her *raison d'être*: posters urging crew to be quiet – torpedoes and mines lie in wait on the seabed

listening for a "bang, clang, boing, tap, squeak". Even a "tinkle" (no, not one of those...).

And on each ladder there's a reminder of the patrol state – a tick next to the box marks the current status.

Passage state: normal business

Patrol state quiet: only use essential machinery and keep noise to a minimum

Ultra quiet state: only essential weapons and machinery in use.

The latter state is draconian: no flushing the heads, no pumps running, no clattering of hammers, no spud peelers in the galley, rubber seals on locks to stop them banging. The sonar will pick up if any of these instructions have been broken. Most of the crew are sent to bed. It severely impacts on life aboard – and as such can only be sustained for short periods.

"If you're going on a sub hunt, you get into the mindset," says PO 'Chippy' Yates, Westminster's carpenter. "You think about noise as you're going up and down ladders. Each person has a small part to play."

"Normally we're stopping and starting machinery as we like. When you're hunting, you can't switch on the water and fuel pumps, you can't go banging and crashing about."

As well as being picked up by any submarine listening intently, such a racket will also register on Westminster's sonar.

A Type 23 frigate is equipped with two sonar sets – 2050 on the bow, 2087 on the stern.

2050 is fixed and active – it sends sound waves through

the water hoping to strike a submarine, whose hull will bounce the noise back.

It's a time-honoured method of hunting going back three-quarters of a century – and it's far from ideal.

"A bow-mounted sonar is a stupid idea," says Westminster's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Mickey Rooney, a straight-talking Mancunian.

"It's like having an ear on your forehead while driving around the M1 at full tilt."

In other words, it struggles to hear. By sending sound waves through the water, it's also like sending out an invitation to a submarine: *here I am, please sink me*.

The preferred option is the towed array – a 1,700-metre 'tail' which is normally coiled up on a gigantic drum.

This is one half of Sonar 2087 – billed as the best submarine-hunting sonar in the world.

The drum holds the passive – listening – part of the sonar, which looks like the buoys dividing swimming pool lanes.

On the frigate's quarterdeck, the other half of the device: the active pinger, a yellow submersible (known on some ships as Thunderbird 4).

It's lowered to the required depth before the array is unwound, fed through a thin tube like some eel, its passage eased by water which covers the deck like a mini Niagara.

The array – which thrives on its motto *in cauda venenum*, the sting is in the tail – is lined with hydrophones (underwater microphones). Its length means it is not disturbed by noise from the ship's propellers and its



● Mission accomplished... HMS Kent's Merlin returns to mother after an anti-submarine exercise

Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, HMS Kent

depth can be altered depending on the water conditions.

Because water isn't simply water. It has different temperature layers, different levels of salinity. All affect how far sound will travel.

"Water is a complex beast," says CPO Stroud. "If conditions are right, you can hear half way across the Atlantic from the Channel.

"Sonar 2087 is incredibly sensitive. It's like a pin microphone on a TV presenter picking up the flapping of a butterfly on the moon."

Whatever Sonar 2087 picks up is fed to the operators' room at the back of the frigate's ops room.

A computer console with the power of around 50 desktop PCs tries to make sense of all the data collected.

When Westminster's hunting for real, a TART -Towed Array Response Team - who are the Navy's No.1 experts in using 2087, helps the ship's own operators to understand the readouts.

Unlike the bow sonar's very 1970s monochrome display, 2087's computers are in colour - but don't expect graphics to please the X-Box 360 generation. If there are any veteran video gamers out there, think *Tetris* meets *Asteroids* (minus the fun).

Sonar 2087 is only part of the Type 23 anti-submarine sucker punch. The knockout blow is delivered by a Merlin (the entire fleet is currently in the middle of a £750m upgrade to turn the original Mk1 which has been in service a dozen years to the Mk2).

Thanks to its five-hour endurance, Merlin allows a 21st-Century escort to fight the submarine battle "at arm's length".

No longer does a frigate ram or charge down a submarine. No longer are depth charges rolled off the stern. No longer do Hedgehogs and Squids rain mortar bombs down on an underwater foe.

The ship sits far away, hopefully well beyond the range of a submarine. Put your Merlin aloft, send it over the horizon for several hours, dropping sonobuoys - underwater microphones - while you're streaming your towed array and maybe you'll find that stalker, especially if you draw a line across its anticipated path.

Just as the Germans formed lines of wolfpacks to intercept incoming convoys, so a line or pattern of these buoys, which feed back information for around six hours, can lie secretly in wait for a boat.

Until not too long ago, Merlin would be aided in this task by maritime patrol aircraft, notably the RAF's Nimrod.

For the Joint Warrior exercise, international aircraft entered the fray such as a Brazilian P3 Orion.

These patrol planes can remain aloft for ten hours, scouring hundreds of square miles of ocean, their radar picking up submarines raising periscopes or 'snorting' to recharge their batteries, their patterns of sonobuoys acting as underwater traps.

That's the theory. And in practice such operations are typically played out in open

waters. Not the North Channel or Minches.

"These are difficult waters - narrow waters - in which to find a submarine," explains Sqn Ldr Ade Chapman, an ex-Nimrod flier now overseeing the aerial intelligence battle of Joint Warrior.

"The ships are making a lot of noise, which drowns out the sound of a submarine. It doesn't help when a ship goes steaming through your sonobuoy barrier at full tilt. *This is about as challenging as it gets.*"

As much as he and fellow submarine hunters hate these waters, submariners themselves quite like them.

"I was listening to an adaptation of the *Cruel Sea* on the radio," says Lt Cdr Nick Pomfrett, the exercise's submarine staff officer, with relish.

"The Compass Rose was using the same training area as we do. Here we are training in the same waters as they did back in the war."

He's studying a cluster of blue markers moving around a chart at Joint Warrior's headquarters in Faslane. The four boats at his disposal are running rings around Westminster and the other warships.

The battle is on. Except that his boys aren't interested in Westminster - other than avoiding her that is.

"The secret these days isn't tonnage. It's getting the prize asset - sinking the carrier or the ship carrying the marines," Lt Cdr Pomfrett explains.

As a deep he (a) views everything on the surface as a potential target and (b) agrees

with Westminster's Capt Beard that anti-submarine warfare has been out of fashion for a long time.

"If you look at what a Fleet does today, it's counter-piracy, maritime security, gunnery, air defence," he says.

"Escorts have become general warships - anti-submarine warfare is not something practised as much as it once was. That's why Joint Warrior is important."

It's also important because it's an entirely different form of warfare.

An air attack is whizz, bang. Over in a flash. Gunnery is for people who like bangs and crashes.

Hunting submarines is dogged. Long-winded. Awfully Slow Warfare. Its practitioners liken it to underwater 3D chess. It's a thinking man's game. Cerebral warfare.

It demands patience. Who's got the most patience, the greatest stamina?

"There's only so much technology can do. Most of the time you're trying to put yourself in the other person's mind - it's a real intellectual challenge," says Capt Beard.

"It's about suppressing the submarine, keeping him under pressure."

His executive officer nods. "If you're hunting them carefully, putting noise in the water, sending Merlins up, they have beads of sweat running down their faces," says Lt Cdr Waite.

And that's not a million miles away from *The Cruel Sea* or *Das Boot*.

Westminster is leading a rather scattered formation of ships - veteran Canadian destroyer Iroquois, fellow Type 23 Montrose, Type 45 Diamond and finally helicopter carrier *Illustrious* and her Royal Marines: the 'high value asset' in this modern-day 'convoy'.

In the operations room, AB Clarke is still looking intently at his display.

His 2050 readout provides various details of any contact encountered: speed, range, bearing and 'confidence': 0 means it's unlikely to be a submarine, 9 means it most likely is.

The 'Possub' - confidence 5 - turned out to be 'no sub': a wreck on the bed of the North Channel.

Riser bearing one-four-zero degrees. Four miles.

'Riser' is a submarine's periscope or mast emerging from the water, picked up by Westminster's surface radar.

At that range, it's too late for *Action Lynx*, *Action Lynx* (unless the helicopter's already airborne).

There's an offensive option: loose a few Sting Ray torpedoes. And the defensive: launch Sonar 2170 which can jam or decoying incoming torpedoes.

If you're going on the attack, four launchers - two port, two starboard - carry Sting Rays.

High-pressure air thrusts the weapon out of the side of the ship, before a tiny parachute slows its descent into the ocean.

Ordinarily, the torpedoes sit inertly in their racks - up to two dozen of them if things are really kicking off.

It's down to a small team of

weapon engineers, led by CPO 'Gunter' Batten, to prepare them for action: one inside 30 minutes, two within three-quarters of an hour.

He's in charge as one of his shipmates reads off a check list and two sailors prep the weapon - although it's actually down to the bombheads from the ship's flight to load the readied torpedo on to the Lynx.

Also in the racks, a two-metre-long green tube: a depth charge, which can only be dropped by the helicopter.

"It's old fashioned but you cannot do anything against it," says Gunter. "You cannot decoy it."

"They're not very accurate, but they do have a massive psychological impact. One going off is quite an impressive sight."

Back in the ops room, the intense chatter of sailors fixed to their displays is suddenly drowned out.

Torpedo in the water bearing zero-nine-zero degrees. Time to impact three minutes.

Travelling at 70-80 knots - 80-92mph, or at least one mile every 45 seconds - it makes the torpedo just four miles away.

Launch Torpedo Defence System.

Torpedo defence system away.

Time to impact 60 seconds.

Time to impact: ten seconds.

BRACE. BRACE. BRACE.

Plus five.

Plus ten.

Weapon expires in one minute, 20 seconds.

Advantage: escort - on this occasion.





BIGGEST

ROUTINE.

Call the Hands at 7am. Turn-out by 8am. Stand-easy around 10am. Scrub at midday and again around 6pm (7pm if you're an officer).

Yes, you can pretty much set your watch by most days at sea.

The Naval calendar's pretty regimented too. Brickwoods field gun run in June. Air days at Yeovilton and Culdrose at the beginning and end of July respectively. Commemorations on Victory each Trafalgar Day.

And each April and October you're guaranteed all-out war raging off the coast of Scotland for Joint Warrior. Regular as clockwork.

There was little routine about the latest Joint Warrior 131 – not the 131st, but (20)13 No.1 – billed as the largest military exercise in western Europe in 2013, and (possibly) the biggest JW yet.

Certainly in terms of scope and variety the 'biggest' billing seems a reasonable tag.

It extended from aerial ranges out some 100 miles into the North Sea off the coast of Angus, to the north-western tip of Scotland, through the Western Isles, down to the Solway Firth.

There were helicopter assaults. Fast jet raids. Swarm attacks by fast craft. Submarine hunts. Amphibious landings by day and night. Mine disposal. Parachute drops. Live gunnery ashore and at sea. Some typical Scottish weather (horizontal rain, very low cloud, bucking bronco seas) and, very occasionally, atypical Scottish weather (becalmed seas, infinite skies, glaring sunshine).

It was all directed (apart from the weather, that's in God's hands) by a 23-strong staff, which swelled to around 200, for the duration of the exercise.

They take over an otherwise deserted top floor of an office block at Faslane (which is about as tall as the low clouds descending on a murky Gareloch when the weather sets in), from where once the RN response to sortieing Soviet submarines was organised.

For 48 weeks of the year, the rooms are dormant. But each spring and early autumn they come alive as the Joint Warrior planners from JTEPS – the Joint Tactical Exercise

Planning Staff – decamp from their Northwood HQ to the Clyde and the command centre teems with life and the buzz of military figures rushing around, trying to ensure that this four-dimensional war game, played on, above and below the waves as well as on land – runs exactly as intended.

"It's incredible watching so many people getting on with the job – people from different backgrounds, different countries, who've never worked together, slipping straight into the exercise," says Cdr Richard Goldstone, Joint Warrior's senior naval staff officer.

"This is the exercise of choice. It's the most realistic, most complex, best value for money exercise there is."

Best value? Surely with a cast of thousands it must cost a packet.

Surprisingly not. You're already paying for the ships, sailors, and aircraft. The only additional costs come from the extras: the use of jetskis to simulate fast-attack craft or civvy helicopters to ferry visitors and stores around. Total bill: around £1m. In these straitened financial times, that's a bargain.

Of course, Joint Warrior isn't run because it's cheap (relatively speaking). It's run because it's useful.

"We issue a general invite: come to our party, but bring something with you," says Cdr Goldstone. "We want you to benefit. We want to benefit from your presence."

This time 12 nations accepted the invitation – Canada, Poland, Netherlands, France, Germany, USA, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Belgium and Brazil.

In total they mustered 43 ships and four submarines in Scottish waters. Throw in substantial elements of 3 Commando Brigade, Dutch marines, the French Foreign Legion, Fleet Air Arm helicopters, Apache gunships, RAF Typhoons and Tornados, the Charles de Gaulle's air group, P3 Orions to name a few and you had an international cast of thousands: around 12,500 men and women in all.

Some came to fight the cause of Dragonia. Others to side with Pastonia. And others still to play piggies in the middle to prevent

the two antagonists from coming to blows.

For the duration of Joint Warrior, Ireland became Rynania, Scotland was Pastonia, northern England and Wales were Dragonia and the rump of England Avalon.

North-west Pastonia had a predominantly Dragonian populace, while there was a sizeable Pastonian enclave nestling on Dragonian soil straddling the Solway Firth.

In short, such boundaries and ethnic mixes spell trouble – a scenario played out all too often in the real world, alas.

And whilst the names of the states were fictitious, the exercise was played for real. News bulletins were posted on message boards, sailors were briefed on their mission in support of whichever nation they were siding with – and, more importantly, were expected to know that mission if buttonholed by senior officers. In 2013, the reason why is far more important than doing and dying.

NO SHIP or unit at Joint Warrior is assessed. It's not a pass or fail exercise.

However, this latest two-week workout served as an important final major test for 42 Commando, about to take over as the UK's lead commando group; for the staff directing this autumn's Cougar amphibious task force deployment in the Med; and for the minehunting battle staff about to deploy to the Gulf.

But it's not just about big units and command staffs.

"Everyone should get something out of Joint Warrior," says Cdr Goldstone. "No-one should be bored by it. There's everything imaginable going on: hunting submarines, terrorist attacks, piracy and minehunting operations, amphibious landings.

"It's challenging, it's live. Every day you are presented with something new, unexpected. You have to rise to that challenge."

Like fending off 30 RIBs, jetskis and other small craft swarming out of lochs and inlets in the Firth of Clyde.

"Send a jet against us, bring it

on. Seawolf will take care of it," says Lt Cdr Mickey Rooney, HMS Westminster's weapon engineer officer.

"I'm much more worried about a lot of jetskis."

Can a large and clunky force of carriers, assault ships and frigates get through unscathed?

Probably not.

As the swarms gathered, the ship watched them at long range courtesy of her infra-optic camera system, then readied for battle, all guns manned, and with her 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx buzzing around the Firth, M3M .5 calibre machine-gun also cleared for action.

"We knew what was coming. And we knew there was only so much we could do," Lt Cdr Rooney adds.

"It was an epic sight. Our guns blazing. The helicopter shooting away. Throwing the ship around. Some of my lads said it was the best day they'd spent in the Navy."

By the time of the swarm assault, the Portsmouth-based frigate had already run the gauntlet of a quartet of nuclear and diesel submarines gathering at the foot of the Minches hoping to pick off the task force one-by-one (and by and large, the boats succeeded).

She'd also ridden through some lumpy seas. Very lumpy seas. The Type 23 was thrown around something chronic off Cape Wrath – as the film sequence below, captured by PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, shows – rather more than HMS Diamond accompanying her.

But it's just what the commanding officer of the 'capital ship' wants. Variety. Realism.

"Look at the scale of Joint Warrior," enthuses Westminster's CO Capt Hugh Beard.

"It is a fantastic training exercise – you get more quality training here than practically anywhere else."

FOR the Royal Marines, JW131 was another step down the long road of re-learning the art of amphibious warfare. Having spent over a dozen years in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Corps is slowly returning to its seagoing roots –





pictures: po(photos) paul a'barrow and sean clec
and la(photos) dean nixon and nicky wilson



IS BEST

“bridging the gap between the sea and the land,” as 3 Cdo Bde’s Brig Martin Smith puts it.

“We are re-learning our core amphibious business as well as driving our capability into the future with new Viking vehicles, new weapons and new communications equipment.”

This ‘re-learning’ wasn’t confined to landing craft raids or helicopter assaults courtesy of Junglie Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force and RAF Chinooks.

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Royals carried out a parachute drop, jumping out of the back of a Herc flying at just 600ft over the Galloway terrain.

Their dropzone was a 250-square-metre patch of Braid Fell, an old MOD range on the eastern shore of Loch Ryan.

250 square metres? That’s the size of a tennis court.

The ten men making the leap hailed from the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron of 30 Cdo IX Group.

Their job, like the pre-landing force put ashore in small boats, is to furtively assess the terrain, infrastructure, population and ascertain enemy dispositions. They feed that intelligence back ahead of the main assault.

The parachute drop at Braid Fell – apparently the first in the history of the exercise – was close to the southern limit of Joint Warrior’s vast domain.

At the north-western extremity, the commando gunners were letting rip – a fairly rare occurrence in the UK.

Thanks to its remote location, you can knock the seven bells out of Cape Wrath and the seemingly-indescribable Garvie Island just offshore (bombed repeatedly by the RAF and Fleet Air Arm down the years because its dimensions are similar to an aircraft carrier).

But huge swathes of the Joint Warrior exercise areas have a sensitive environmental balance.

Around the Minches and the Hebrides there are waters where no anchoring, no refuelling are allowed. The beaches around Stranraer, used for the amphibious

phase, are home to a rare newt; an expert is brought in at a cost of around £250 a day to make sure all the military activity hasn’t disturbed them.

There are low-flying rules in force to protect sea eagles, bridge and upper deck teams keep a sharp lookout for marine life.

Sometimes that’s easier than others... such as when a seal swam into the loading dock of flagship HMS Bulwark amid amphibious operations.

Normally used by Royal Marines landing craft, the dock became home to the mammal for about half an hour; it even crawled out of the water on to the ramp, flapped around and seemed to enjoy the attention shown it by the commando and growing band of ship’s company taking happy snaps.

On the human side, too, great care is taken. Fishermen are informed well in advance of what’s taking place and where dummy mines are being dropped, for example. And farmers are told of the dates of Joint Warrior five years ahead of schedule so they can plan their lambing seasons.

Right now, however, farmers, lambs and fishermen would do well to stay clear of Cape Wrath.

The gunners from 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery – green-lidded soldiers – are loosing their 105mm field guns on the ranges, just one part of a Napoleonic *feu d’enfer* (hellish concert) raining down on enemy positions a few miles away.

The 4.5in Krytens of HMS Diamond and Westminster joined in, as did 42 Cdo’s 81mm mortars, and Swedish mortars, while the 200 assaulting commandos brought their General Purpose Machine Guns during a night-time raid.

“It is as realistic as we can get,” explains Capt Dave Thatcher of 29 Cdo Regt RA.

“It is one of the few places in the UK where we can practise this type of large-scale firing exercise.

“All the ammunition being used is live. This is exactly how it would happen in a real life situation.”

Which is just what the Royals want. With 42 on the cusp of taking over as the nation’s on-call

commando unit as Joint Warrior ended (they were handed the baton on May 1 by their Scottish comrades from 45 Cdo), the fortnight of amphibious training was precisely what the doctor ordered.

“For us this is the first time we have properly been on board a ship and it is all about us getting back to our amphibious capability,” said Maj David Ethell, second-in-command of 42 Cdo.

“As a marine, this is what we joined up for.”

As the lead commando group, 42 are now at five day’s notice to move in response to rapidly unfolding world events such as the fictional crisis raging in Dragonia and Pastonia.

Pencilled into the Bickleigh boys’ calendar for this autumn is the latest Cougar deployment with the UK’s Response Force Task Group, whose commander, Cdre Paddy McAlpine, was choreographing ships and helicopters such that the marines and their kit could be put ashore at the right place in the right time and in the right order.

“This amphibious task group has the flexibility to react to anything from humanitarian assistance to conventional war fighting against a uniformed enemy; this is what we have been able to exercise and prove during Joint Warrior – that we can fight at and from the sea,” he said.

The captain of his helicopter/commando carrier, HMS Illustrious, concurs. Individual ship training (such as Lusty is going through right now off Plymouth) is all well and good, but you also need the bigger picture.

“Exercises like this are ideal for that because we must all learn each other’s constraints, capabilities, issues and opportunities and there is a healthy respect of each in terms of what each of us can provide,” says Capt Martin Connell, Illustrious’ CO.

By the time the next Joint Warrior, No. 132, comes around in mid-October his ship will be away on Cougar, working once again with the French – and many of the lessons learned here off Scotland will be put into practice.





Wham bam. Grand Slam

THIS is what you want to see.

None of that fluffy stuff. Kissing babies. Cycle rides from Lands End to John O'Groats. Sprucing up run-down community centres.

No, you want to see fire and fury. You want to smell cordite in the morning. And in the afternoon. And in the evening.

You want the barrel of a Minigun to continue whirring long after the last round has left it.

You want to see the killer tomato peppered like a colander.

You want to put a hole in that ship big enough to sink it.

You want to blast that target into a million pieces.

And if, like us, you want all that, you want to be aboard HMS Montrose, for in a week of unparalleled and dazzling firepower, she loosed *every* weapon system aboard – known in the RN as a grand slam – over seven days off the coasts of Scotland and Wales.

The ordnance extravaganza – believed to be the first time a Type 23 frigate has unleashed as much firepower in a single week – began with a rare launching of two Harpoon anti-ship missiles in the mid-Atlantic, sent hurtling into a target barge dozens of miles away.

Not since HMS Brave was sunk as a target in the summer of 2004 has a Type 23 launched one of the £750,000 sea-skimming missiles.

In this case, the object of destruction was a specially-designed target barge, lolling in the Scottish exercise areas.

"The intensity and stress of conducting complex warfare training increases tenfold when you know that there is almost a quarter of a tonne of warhead on the end of the live missile you are about to fire – but so is the satisfaction increased when you successfully achieve your goal," said Lt Ben Evans, Montrose's Principal Warfare Officer (Air).

It fell to his commanding officer, Cdr James Parkin, to give the final authority.

"Of all the times I have said 'command approved' in my career so far, it was this one that I enjoyed the most," Cdr Parkin said.

"A successful firing of our Harpoon missiles has proven that my professional team of highly-trained sailors are at the top of their game, and that we are ready for any tasking that we are given."

It was thanks to the weapons engineering team aboard, headed by Lt Cdr Tony Marden, that the Harpoon – held in one of four large grey tubes protruding above the frigate's forecastle – was ready to fire.

"Firing our cutting-edge missiles is not an everyday event – but ensuring the availability of the equipment required to do so is, and my team of professional engineers take great pride in having proved their mettle," he said.

In various forms, Harpoon has been around since the late 1970s. The missile – around 15ft long and 1ft in diameter – is launched by a booster rocket before a turbojet powers it along at Mach .9 (just under the speed of sound) towards seagoing targets up to 80 miles away.

The RN last tested the missile against the decommissioned Type 22 frigate HMS Brave in the summer of 2004, when both the ship-borne and submarine-carried version of Harpoon were tested by HMS Argyll and Sceptre.

In this instance, the blow delivered by the first Harpoon – which carried no warhead, only telemetry – impacting on the barge was sufficient to deal it a fatal blow.

With the smell of rocket booster still lingering, Montrose demonstrated how she might fend off an incoming Harpoon – or other anti-ship missiles – by firing her Sea Gnat, scattering chaff in the Scottish skies.

Next up, the very rare launch of the onboard Sting Ray torpedoes. Typically fired by the frigate's Lynx or Merlin helicopter, Montrose and her sisters also carry

four tubes – the Magazine Torpedo Launching System – to launch the weapon (which was subsequently recovered from the Sea of Hebrides).

High-pressure air thrusts the weapon out of the side of the ship, before a tiny parachute slows its descent into the ocean. It's rarely used as today's warships prefer to conduct battle with a submarine at arm's length.

A day of small arms and close-range gunnery against floating targets honed the marksmanship of Montrose's gunners as they directed the 30mm Automated Small Calibre Gun, a pair of Mk44 Miniguns and all the ship's General Purpose Machine Guns at a floating 'killer tomato'.

After that the crowdpleaser weighed in, the frigate's main 4.5in gun – billed by her weapons engineering department as "the most reliable turret in the fleet".

To live up to that tag, an entire day of shooting followed with 150 high-explosive rounds landing on targets on a range off the Welsh coast – without a single stoppage or defect.

"The noise was so impressive it led to calls from concerned civilians to Welsh news outlets wondering about the source of all the rumblings and explosions on a Bank Holiday," said Lt Cdr Marden.

The reliability of Montrose's ordnance can largely be attributed to the head of the ordnance group, CPO(ET) David 'Izzy' Bent.

"It takes many hours of hard work by me and my team to keep our weapon systems at the highest possible operational readiness, but it is worth every minute when they work flawlessly when called upon by command."

And still the Grand Slam wasn't done. The penultimate weapon system to be tested was her Seawolf missile system – the main line of defence against attacking enemy aircraft and missiles.

In this instance, Seawolf's foe was a target towed behind an aircraft, with Lt Evans directing the system from the bowels of the operations room.

"One of my key roles on board is the gunnery officer, and this week has been the best of my naval career," he said. "To fire all of our weapon systems is an incredible feeling, but to do the 'Grand Slam' in a week is unheard of."

Lt Cdr Marden added: "Montrose may well be the only frigate to have fired all of her weapons in a week, and it is testament to the hard work and dedication of maintainers and operators alike that we were able to do so without a hitch. The smell of cordite now permeates the ship – and it gives everyone a lift."

The final piece of the Grand Slam jigsaw was a ceremonial firing: the saluting gun fired seven times as Montrose entered Plymouth Sound and acknowledged her affiliation with the gunners of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, based at the Citadel.

Aside from the ceremonial, the reason for all this firepower was to fine tune all aboard ready for the frigate's looming deployment.

The year to date has been devoured by intensive training and exercises, first off Plymouth, then off western Scotland.

Montrose is about to start her final period of maintenance ahead of going overseas for six months – but before she could do so she was required to test all of her armament in realistic conditions, to check system performance and ensure that the ship's company could react correctly when required to fire live munitions.

"Having now proved all of our anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine weapons systems, everyone on board shares in the success of our Grand Slam," said Cdr Parkin.

"A warship is the ultimate team, and every missile that hits its target, every round that leaves the barrel of a gun, belongs as much to the chef who cooked breakfast that day, or the stoker who provided the electricity, as it does to the gunner who pulled the trigger, or the engineer who prepared the weapon overnight."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, FRPU East, and HMS Montrose's ship's company



Lessons and tributes in Normandy

Blazer quest

EU warning over piracy threat

SAILORS and Royal Marines from HMS Raleigh headed to the beaches and *bocage* of Normandy to learn about the greatest invasion in history – and pay their respects to their forebears.

Two dozen personnel – mostly instructors at the Military Training Unit, which teaches sailors to use small arms – spent three days revisiting sites carved into the annals of history 69 years ago.

Each sailor and marine was expected to give a talk and presentation on a particular aspect of the battle for Normandy – and, where relevant, draw parallels with present-day operations.

La Cambe cemetery near Carentan was the first stop – last resting place of 21,000 Germans.

CPO Jock Rennie said the overwhelming impression was “one of darkness”, adding: “It was a shocking and sobering experience especially when you came across a stone with four names and realised this was a tank crew who all died together.”

Six miles north of the German burial ground are the gun emplacements at Pointe du Hoc, created to defend Omaha Beach, the next destination – as featured in *Saving Private Ryan*.

“When we saw the lie of the land and how well defended the German positions were, it made us all realise the enormity of the task undertaken by the US Army,” said CPO Rennie.

The assault on Omaha cost the Americans 3,000 casualties, most of whom are interred along the coast at Colleville-sur-Mer.

Among those buried here, Theodore Roosevelt Jr, son of the president of the same name, and two of the Niland brothers, Preston and Robert – whose fate inspired *Saving Private Ryan*.

The Raleigh party then moved east to Longues Battery, where four 6in guns guarded the approaches to Arromanches – the site of Gold Beach on D-Day.

It fell to submariner PO Donald Keyes to explain the importance of naval gunfire support to the team... many of whom were gunners.

Arromanches itself is perhaps the iconic D-Day site – not least because the sands and waters are still peppered with the remains of the Mulberry Harbour which sustained the Allied advance.

At Sword Beach, near Ouistreham, the visitors learned of the role of RN beachmasters who got vehicles, supplies and men off the sands in an orderly fashion, while nearby the party was shown around the German Hillman bunker complex.

The tour concluded by the banks of the Orne River and Caen Canal and Pegasus Bridge, seized in the very first minutes of D-Day by airborne troops.

Nearby is the village of Ranville, where 2,563 men of all nationalities are buried.

After a poem by LS Hawkings in memory of his uncle who’s laid to rest there, Sgt McGhee delivered a summary of the sacrifices made by the British on D-Day, before a minute’s silence.

PO Andrew Veale laid a wreath on behalf of the Military Training Unit and CPO Rennie laid a wreath on behalf of Torpoint RBL, of which he is a member.

“Oh, the wind is lashing lustily...!” Winnie the Pooh would indeed have wished Gosport Sea Cadets a ‘Happy Winds-day’ as they headed out of Portsmouth Harbour into choppy seas and a gusty 25-knot stiff breeze on board HMS Blazer for an acquaint visit to one of the Royal Navy’s patrol boats, *writes Heather Lane*.

For seven lucky teenagers from TS Hornet, Gosport’s unit, the opportunity to go to sea with the Navy was too good to miss – whatever the weather forecast had in store for them.

The visit was coordinated with Southampton’s University RN Unit (URNU) by ex-submariner Mike Highwood, secretary of the Solent branch of the Royal Institute of Navigators (RIN), who was helping the cadets to understand the principles of navigation and brought his laptop equipped with the latest electronic navigation systems.

“The RIN encourages interest in navigation in both land, sea, air and space so getting these local youngsters to sea really benefits their understanding and is also a great experience,” said Mike.

“I was lucky to meet a P2000 CO at Lymington Yacht club and we agreed to link up the cadets with the URNU.”

For Sea Cadet Matthew Pipe, 14, it was a day he’d been really looking forward to.

“It’s been a real eye-opener, seeing what life is like on the ship,” he said.

“I’ve visited HMS Dauntless before, which is pretty impressive, but this is my first time at sea on a P2000, which is a lot tighter, and it’s interesting to see how the smaller space is used by the crew.”

After a couple of hours out on the lumpy seas, Blazer’s CO Lt Amie Jackson decided that was enough excitement for the cadets on the flying bridge in the gusting wind, and brought her ship safely back alongside in the shelter of Gosport Marina for lunch.

Accompanied by TS Hornet’s CO, former Army signaller CPO Tony Salmon, and civilian instructor Renee Smith, the cadets split into two groups for briefing tours of the ship.



● AB Sam Geere, of HMS Blazer, talks to Gosport Sea Cadet unit members Amy Varndell, Matthew Pipe and James Potter about signal flags



● Gosport Sea Cadets on board HMS Blazer in Portsmouth Harbour

Pictures: Heather Lane

development and maritime skills taught by the enthusiastic volunteers at the cadet unit.

Blazer is one of the 14 P2000 Archer class fast inshore patrol vessels that belong to the Portsmouth-based First Patrol Boat Squadron.

The ships support the sea training of undergraduates from many of the country’s leading universities through the URNUs but are also tasked by Navy Command for a variety of roles including wider engagement opportunities and youth outreach that broaden naval understanding and provide maritime experience.

Lt Jackson was pleased that they’d been able to enjoy some

time out in the Solent despite the choppy conditions.

“It’s great to be able to build these links between the Portsmouth-based ships and local sea cadet units,” she said.

“We often see them out and about on the water in their own boats and I know that they really appreciate a chance to get to sea alongside the regular Navy.

“Although we have a really busy programme lined up with the University Squadron and in support of Navy Command priorities, such as the Battle of the Atlantic commemorations, this is the first time I’ve had Sea Cadets to sea – but hope it won’t be the last time during my command.”

EU warning over piracy threat

THE Operation Commander of the EU Naval Force, Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant RN, has issued a renewed warning that Somali pirates are still determined to get out to sea and, if presented with an easy target, will attack.

“I am very concerned that seafarers and nations will lower their guard and support for counter piracy operations in the belief that the piracy threat is over,” said Rear Admiral Tarrant.

“It is not; it is merely contained. We should remember that at its height in January 2011, 32 ships were pirated by Somali pirates and 736 hostages were held.

“It is crucial that we remain vigilant or the number of attacks will once again rise.”

The Admiral’s warning comes days after EU Naval Force warship ESPS Rayo located a skiff with six men on board 320 nautical miles off the Somali coast, which aroused suspicion.

They had no reason to be so far from land, and there was no evidence of trade or legal activity; the men were returned to the Somali coast.

Looking south

A NEW exhibition at the Historic Dockyard Chatham looks at expeditions by Antarctic explorers Capt Robert Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton.

The two doomed expeditions – Scott’s 1910-13 Terra Nova foray and Shackleton’s 1914-17 Endurance campaign – are displayed through the words, images and artefacts of those who survived, and those who died, on the frozen continent.

The exhibition, in association with the Royal Geographical Society, is at No1 Smithery: The Gallery until August 30.

www.thedockyard.co.uk

Commodore bows out

MAKING his exit on a steam lorry, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan bid farewell to his establishment and the career he has pursued for 35 years.

Cdre Mark Slawson rode off on HMS Sultan’s Super Sentinel lorry as the ship’s company of the Gosport training centre wished him farewell.

The officer’s career encompassed six warships, several roles within the MOD’s Equipment and Support organisation – and even a previous stint at Sultan in the 1980s.

Cdre Slawson said: “To have been in command of HMS Sultan for the past three years has been an enormous honour and privilege.

“HMS Sultan has a well-deserved reputation as a welcoming, friendly and professional establishment.”

He added: “I am leaving Sultan to take up the ultimate promotion (becoming a civvy!) with mixed feelings.

“Anticipation and some excitement at the challenges that lie ahead, coupled with a huge pride

in the establishment I am leaving, and enormous affection for the people that work within it.”

The reins of the Royal Navy’s largest engineering training establishment have now been passed on to Capt Trevor Gulley, previously the head of the RN’s Marine Engineering School, which is also based at Sultan.

Medals for HQ staff

FIVE members of the Royal Navy were among 13 personnel at Northwood HQ to receive medals from Air Cdre Michael Jenkins, Head of Transformation for Joint Forces Command.

PO Daniel Foord received a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, while WO1 Steve Reddick was given a clasp to his LS&GC medal.

Operational Service Medals with Clasp were presented to Lt Cdr Sasha Miller and PO Joe Dwyer, while LH James Birch was given a NATO Non-Article 5 Medal.

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Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Shread



● The Navy Medics Stretcher Team and Olympian Chris Sherrington

All stars in trek

A CHEERING reception greeted the intrepid team of Navy medics as they completed their 360-mile stretcher-carrying trek from Birmingham to Plymouth raising funds for military charities.

On their final leg, the team were also joined by Olympic athlete Chris Sherrington who represented Team GB at London 2012 as the UK's first heavyweight judoka in 20 years.

Chris said: "Being a Royal Marine, Hasler Company is a unit close to my heart. I am delighted to be able to come along and support them."

Team leader Lt 'Jack' Nicholson praised his weary walkers and carriers as they finished at the Hasler Company HQ in the Naval Base at Devonport.

Jack is a patient services officer at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth and has also worked at Camp Bastion Hospital in Afghanistan. He helped carry the stretcher through 14 destinations, representing a typical patient treatment 'pathway' following serious injury.

He said: "I couldn't have done it without the team support and the great British public who cheered us on when we were exhausted. Drivers stopped and put £20 in the buckets; they saw the uniforms and stretchers and realised it was a worthwhile cause."

Co-walker PO Morgan Long was singled out for special mention by the team leader. Chris said: "Morgan made this happen. Thanks to his efforts we had discounted and free food and accommodation along the way. He has been brilliant."

The trek raised funds for a number of military charities who work to improve the quality of life for servicemen and women - the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine's Patient Welfare Fund, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Help for Heroes.

New trustee and fundraising teams

A NEW trustee has been appointed to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Stephen Watson is Chief Executive of CTN Communications, one of the UK's leading corporate communications agencies.

A prominent supporter of the charity, Stephen has had a close association with the Royal Navy for many years, helping advise on communications and messaging.

He worked closely with the Navy Board during the last Strategic Defence and Security Review and chairs a Communications Advisory Group for the First Sea Lord.

Cdre Annette Picton, trustee of the charity since January 2012 has also been appointed as Vice Chair.

Vice Admiral Sir Richard Ibbotson, Chairman of the Trustees of the RNRMC, said: "I am absolutely delighted that Annette has agreed to take on the role of vice chair. She brings an extraordinary blend of professional naval experience and charity expertise and will provide an excellent balance between the role of the chairman and the Board."

The RNRMC is also expanding its fundraising and marketing teams as demand for support from the charity continues to rise.

Hugh Thompson has been appointed as Head of Fundraising.

Hugh joins the charity with a military family background and

15 years' fundraising experience.

He was previously Director of Fundraising and Marketing at North Devon Hospice, which saw income increase from £1.1m to over £2.5m a year under his tenure.

Hugh will be overseeing a team of Regional Fundraisers, which includes new Regional Community Fundraiser Malcolm Pollock.

Malcolm joins the team from a career in the Royal Navy and one of his recent roles was as Executive Officer, HMS Drake, where he was instrumental in setting up Hasler Company, the Centre for seriously injured and ill Naval Service personnel.

New Supporter Services Executive, Victoria Hall, whose partner serves in the Royal Navy, also joins the fundraising team, having co-run the Afghanistan Trust for the Parachute Regiment.

The RNRMC's Head of Marketing and Communications, Jessica Ortlepp, joins the charity from the Youth Sport Trust and previous roles with the Government, promoting UK trade and investment.

The wider RNRMC Group sees one of its integrated charities, the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund, appoint former Royal Marine, Richard Kenworthy, as their permanent Fundraising Campaign Manager.

Richard has been instrumental in driving the RMCTF campaign over the last six months.

Robert Robson, CEO of the RNRMC, welcomed the new appointments, saying: "The wealth of experience, skills and vision they bring will help the charity to build for the future. The RNRMC is unique in being grant-maker to improve the quality of life for our Naval family, past and present."

"We are achieving more than ever before, and establishing partnerships that allow us to reach even greater numbers of those in need."



● HRH The Duke of York addresses guests and veterans at the Battle of the Atlantic dinner on *Illustrious*

Charity at heart of anniversary

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity was involved in the commemorations for the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous military campaign in World War 2.

A series of events staged in the South-East and North-West included a charity dinner on board HMS *Illustrious* in London.

The dinner, in aid of the RNRMC and Seafarers UK, was sponsored by Diageo, owner of the Johnnie Walker whisky brand (Capt 'Johnnie' Walker was instrumental in turning the tide against the U-boat threat).

A fundraising auction for the two charities on the night made in excess of £50,000 from bids for items that included the highly-prized lot of a weekend for 22 guests at Drummur Castle - Diageo's Home of Scotch Whisky.

In Liverpool, the RNRMC agreed to co-sponsor the Veterans Welcome Centre with the Royal British Legion and Seafarers UK, opened especially for the weekend's celebrations, to give veterans somewhere

to rest their legs, and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat with fellow former Service personnel.

With a Royal Marines Band concert and 1940s Tea Party in aid of the charity organised by local fundraiser Pamela Brown and ships collecting donations from visitors, it all pointed to a hectic weekend.

The charity was also present at the Memorial Service in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral led by the RNRMC's Patron, the Princess Royal.

Head of fundraising, Hugh Thompson said: "The dinner on board HMS *Illustrious* was the first of my events at the helm of the fundraising team for the RNRMC and was a great opportunity to honour and pay tribute to the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy veterans for their bravery and sacrifice in order to sustain victory 70 years ago."

"The charity is delighted to have supported the national anniversary commemorations and is extremely grateful to have received such generous support on this special occasion - ensuring we're here to support the Naval family for years to come."

"I am particularly impressed at how the charities work together for the benefit of all of our beneficiaries."



● Royal Marines Boarding Team 3 and Monmouth's sailors complete the Commando Charity Challenge

Red Sea Commandos

AS if the 35-degree heat of the Red Sea wasn't tough enough, 'Bootnecks' on board HMS Monmouth thought they'd test their Royal Navy colleagues on the final leg of their seven-month deployment with a commando style obstacle course around the upper deck.

The Commando Charity Challenge was a gruelling obstacle course to test each team's ability to work together and conduct a range of tasks under both mental and physical stress albeit the focus was primarily fun!

Each team of four had to collect a 'casualty' (Fred the man-overboard dummy); 'canoe' on rowing machines as far as they could 'up-stream'; carry the stretcher around the ship's upper

deck through the netted 'jungle', onwards through the 'Smartie-tube' tunnel before reaching a water obstacle.

Keeping the casualty off the deck at all times, the teams had to transfer vital stores (such as water, rations, ammunition and a machine gun) across a 'river' before making a final dash under the cargo net to the Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) to recover the casualty on the inbound helicopter.

Along the way, each team's attached 'Royal' would throw in some productive 'strengthening' exercises such as pull-ups and burpees for good measure whilst each man tried to gather 'intelligence' posted around the obstacle course.

On completion, the team were then tactically questioned by the intelligence cell to find out what they had seen before being given an overall score on a combination of time taken and correct answers given.

Following on from their gruelling 4,825-mile cycle earlier in the deployment, the money raised brought the Marines' total up to just over £3,000.

Officer Commanding Capt Max Breet RM said: "The Royal Marines Boarding Team 3 wishes to offer a sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to the achievement. All proceeds have been totalled alongside our other charity events to date and are to be donated to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity."

RNRMC's mayoral support

THE Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Vivien Pengelly, and the Mayor of Fareham, Cllr Susan Bayford, have chosen the RNRMC as one of the charities to be supported during their terms in office.

The RNRMC will benefit greatly from fundraising opportunities such as dinner events, raffles and auctions, as well as donations from individuals and organisations.

Cllr Pengelly said: "The Royal Navy and Royal Marines have always had a strong presence in Plymouth and I am pleased to support the fantastic work that the RNRMC does for the Naval community."

The chaplain at RM Stonehouse, Plymouth, the Rev Dr Scott Shackleton, has also been appointed as the Lord Mayor of Plymouth's Chaplain for the next year.

Cllr Mrs Bayford, who is a former Wren and comes from a Naval family, said:

"The Royal Navy has close links with this area, so I am delighted to support the good work of the RNRMC during my year as Mayor of Fareham."

"Cdre Mike Mansergh is generously supporting my charities by donating all proceeds from HMS Collingwood's Open Day on June 1."

This is the first time that the RNRMC has been supported in this way.

Commenting on the news, CEO Robert Robson said: "We are absolutely thrilled and honoured to be working in partnership with the Lord Mayor of Plymouth and Mayor of Fareham and I and my team look forward to being involved in a year of activities."

CRY donation

THE charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) received a boost in the form of a cheque for £1,100 following two well-supported fundraising events led by the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at RNAS Culdrose.

CRY is a national charity that supports cardiac screening for local people between 14-35.

The donation to CRY was made on behalf of the Debbie Rendle Memorial Fund, a charity set up by the parents of Debbie, wife of a Culdrose senior rating and champion Cornish rower who died without warning in 2007 of Sudden Death Syndrome.

A St Piran's Day party with entertainment by both a military wives and Mousehole male voice choir and a Six Nations Super Saturday Festival brought in support by members of the mess.

WO Steve Cass said: "A big thank-you has to go to the committee led by CPO Richie Hackett who put it all together."

Blind care in Wales

GENERAL Sir David Richards, Chief of Defence Staff, opened Llandudno's new Blind Veteran's centre, unveiling a monolith of Welsh slate.

He attended a special dedication ceremony for the late Capt Stephen Healy, (1st Battalion, the Royal Welsh) who died last year from his injuries following an IED explosion in Afghanistan.

The General, who is the Vice Patron for the charity said:

"I have been humbled by the courage and positive attitude of those who have faced up to sight loss, regaining their independence through the support of Blind Veterans UK."

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www.rnrmc.org.uk

Injured Royals mean business

WOUNDED Royal Marines are gaining valuable business experience working in support of the Royal Marines Association's trading arm, RMA Operations Ltd.

The not-for-profit company was set up in 2012 and is one of the few merchandise retailers that is officially MOD-licensed to sell RM-branded products.

All of the profit that is made by the company is gift-aided to the RMA to help them to continue to support the wider Corps family.

Set up "by the wounded, for the wounded" they will develop exciting new products, market and promote popular items of high quality merchandise for sale in their online shop and at key events and county shows.

The injured Royals are keen to sharpen their commercial business knowledge and develop new ideas for products while undergoing rehabilitation in Hasler company, a Devon-based unit dedicated to the complex needs of seriously-injured Marines, providing training, mentoring and work placements for those who may be transitioning from the Corps into future civilian careers.

Joe Lane, one of RMA Ops business executives said: "We're expanding with new

ventures, giving members of Hasler Company ownership of the projects to enable them to build their skills, knowledge and confidence to better prepare them for the future.

"One of our ventures is the organisation and project management of fundraising events like marathons and extreme endurance events.

"This not only gives some of our more junior Marines an opportunity to learn vital management and organisational skills but it also helps raise extra money for the RMA."

"Where possible small cottage industries are being run by former Royals or wives and partners of serving Corps members are being used as suppliers. The RM family wins on every front."

The next big event that RMA Operations are planning for is Fathers' Day on June 16.

They have a range of products which will make welcome gifts to serving and veteran Royal Marines (and those who aspire to the lifestyle!).

The company has teamed up with a graphic designer, a serving RM's daughter, who has created a selection of themed cards and gift wrap.

See www.rma-operations.com



Targets smashed in CHICKS row

WHILE 34,631 runners pounded through the streets of London on marathon day, Royal Marine Lt Col Steve Hussey from the Commando Helicopter Force at RN Air Station Yeovilton was rowing furiously over the same distance to achieve two personal challenges he'd set for himself.

Determined to cover the distance in an ambitious three hours, Steve wanted to raise enough money to fund a life-enhancing respite break for disadvantaged children through the children's charity CHICKS (Country Holidays for Inner City Kids).

He smashed his target by 13 minutes covering the 42.195 kilometres (26.2 miles) in 2h 47m, having used as a marker the Elite Women's starting time.

The fastest women's time was ahead of him at 2h 20m by Kenyan Priscah Jeptoo.

Steve said: "With the London marathon broadcast on my TV in front of me as I rowed, some of the moving fundraising stories featured spurred me on to meet my own targets.



● Lt Col Steve Hussey with his two sons, William (6) and Henry (4)

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

"I had spent some of my annual leave as a volunteer at a CHICKS respite camp up on Dartmoor last year prior to a six-month tour in Afghanistan.

"The children CHICKS support have been through such a lot. It was such a rewarding, humbling time that I wanted to find a way to support this local charity."

"My training went really well, I certainly put in the distance –

having completed over 1,345,000 metres since deciding to take on the challenge; this is roughly the equivalent distance from John O'Groats to Land's End, if it could be rowed."

Monies raised so far stands at £1,348, enough to fund a child's respite break – or perhaps more – donate at www.justgiving.com/steve-hussey or text CHIC85 with an amount in to 70070.

Scott's steely magnolia

HOTFOOT from their recent deployment to the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea, returning sailors and officers from the Navy's deep-water ocean survey vessel HMS Scott took up their paint brushes to give Plymouth's Child Development Centre a bit of a revamp.

Eschewing the Pusser's grey paint, the team worked hard all day, priming and painting several rooms and ceilings magnolia.

The ship has a long-standing affiliation with the centre, raising funds annually and also helped to build a pirate ship play area last year.

The centre is a specialist unit that helps children with a variety of development disorders that can result in physical, sensory, emotional or learning difficulties. One of the volunteer decorators

supporting the project, Leading Seaman Stephen Gray said: "After the Centre helped my own children, it was really nice to be able to spend some time helping them out."

Raleigh's ground force

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh weeded flower beds, cleared paths and laid paving slabs in a *Ground Force*-style operation to help three local schools in Torpoint.

Two teams of 22 sailors mucked in at Torpoint's Nursery school, the town's Community College and Carbeile Junior School.

Mrs Becky Lear, head of the Sixth Form at the college said:

"The trainees were amazing, they did a fantastic job, their team working skills were brilliant."

Lt Cdr Steve Boot, Staff Officer Initial Training said: "The RN regularly provides assistance to communities, both in the UK and across the globe, during civil emergencies and in disaster relief operations.

"To get a taste of working within the community early in their careers is invaluable."

ROCKING BRIGHTON

THE sun shone over the Brighton seaside as 9,157 runners took to the streets for the annual marathon.

With only seven weeks preparation, three General Duties Medical Officers sprang into training prior to tackling their first marathon.

A spur of the moment sign-up led to the trio completing the 26.2-mile marathon run in order to raise money for the Neuroblastoma Society.

Surg Lt Charles Wharton set a good pace and completed the course in 3h 28m 20s, finishing


in 710th place.

Surg Lt Louise McMenemy and Surg Lt Jo Laird crossed the finish line in 4h 23m 48s.

Over £600 was raised for the Neuroblastoma Society to enable research into the rare and aggressive childhood cancer, and also to provide support for affected families.

The three Medical Officers have just completed their phase two training at the Institute of Naval Medicine and are now off to CTCRM, HMS Excellent and HMS Raleigh respectively.






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The News







Nigerian honour for Jeannine

A ROYAL Navy officer has received a rare honour by being named an Honorary Member of the renowned Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Lt Jeannine Cooley (*above*), of HMS Argyll, said she was surprised and privileged to receive the membership during the ship's stopover in Lagos, Nigeria.

During the visit a small delegation from the ship took part in a Chatham House conference on Maritime Security in West Africa, hosted by the Institute.

Lt Cooley, the only female onboard Argyll, was part of the team, and at the end of the detailed discussions was awarded the honorary membership by the Institute's Director General Prof Bola A Akinterinwa.

Lt Cooley said: "I'm really honoured and privileged to have been awarded such a prestigious membership and never expected it."

"I'm just a normal Bradford girl doing my job as part of Argyll's crew, providing maritime security and working alongside our African partners in the fight against illegal maritime activity."

Argyll remains one of the very few ships in the Royal Navy which has not been upgraded to embark a full complement of female sailors, though she can embark a limited number of female officers.

A gathering of Nigerian naval officers, who visited the ship, found it surprising that Argyll had only one female onboard and jovially labelled Jeannine, one of three Principal Warfare Officers, as the 'Mother of the Navy'.

Cdr Tim Neild, HMS Argyll's CO – who led the team at the conference – said: "Hopefully the conference will lead to an increased understanding of the current maritime security situation off the West African coast, and some of the key players in attendance can move forward with some of the ideas presented of how to tackle piracy, drug trafficking and illegal fishing."

Clyde hosts new chief

HMS CLYDE hosted the new Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands on board during a routine patrol of East Falkland Island.

Air Commodore Russell La Forte went onboard by boat transfer while the ship was at sea in Choisel Sound, and was given a tour of the patrol vessel by Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Marcus Hember.

One of the capabilities of the versatile ship is to act as a mobile helipad, extending the range of search and rescue helicopters.

On completion of the tour the Air Commodore joined Lt Cdr Hember for tea in the CO's cabin.

Before departing in a search and rescue aircraft, Air Commodore La Forte said: "I've only briefly been on warships before, and it is a real surprise just how much Clyde can do."

"For a crew of only 45 she brings a lot of capabilities to the table."

Commendations for 'exceptional people'

ROYAL Navy and MOD civilian staff have been rewarded for their exceptional efforts and contribution to their units over the past year by the Second Sea Lord and Naval Secretary.

The 13 personnel and groups were presented with commendations from Vice Admiral David Steel on HMS Victory and Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock at the Royal Naval Museum in recognition of their remarkable performance.

Vice Admiral Steel said: "These commendations are my opportunity to recognise the particular contribution that our sailors, marines, RFA and civilian personnel make to the success of their units."

"I was delighted to be able to present my commendations to so many exceptional men and women, in front of their families and friends, and to thank them personally for their hard work and dedication."

Recipients of Second Sea Lord's Commendations included Cdr Bill Evans, who works at Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth, where he sets the bridge watchkeeping, navigation and seamanship standards within the Fleet.

Cdr Evans was chosen after he successfully brought into service a simulator – the Maritime Composite Training System – to give hands-on training on warfare systems.

"It has proved to be a fantastic system that is making a very real and positive difference in the way that we prepare our people for service in the front line," he said.

"That said, I did not do this on my own and the team who helped me, not only from within the School but also the BAE Systems, were just superb."

One of the civilian recipients was Stella Chalmers, who works for Sodexo as a till operator at the Commando Training Centre RM in Lympstone.

Stella stepped in to provide first aid for an elderly man who was choking during a lunch for 115 pensioners and carers from Exmouth on Christmas Day 2012.

As a former nurse, Stella has experience of resuscitation techniques.

Presentations from Rear Admiral Woodcock included commendations for Lt Cdr Rachel Smallwood and Jonathan Stephenson for their contributions to diversity and inclusion issues



Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston

within the Royal Navy.

Rear Admiral Woodcock said: "I was proud to be able to present my commendations to these four outstanding individuals for their enthusiasm and dedication to their jobs."

"This has led to success in their individual areas of business and benefits the rest of the organisation as a whole."

Other recipients, who are pictured above on the steps of Admiralty House with Vice Admiral Steel (left) and Rear

Admiral Woodcock, included Sgt Barnes (for improvement to the HMS Neptune Primary Care Rehabilitation facility); Howard Hale (part of the "highly efficient and successful Honours and Awards team"); Lt Cdr Stephen Henaghen (described as "an iconic sea trainer and a role model for all at Flag Officer Sea Training"); C/Sgt James Swift RM (who played a key role in training boat groups off Weymouth for the Olympics); Lt Stephen Warner (for RM welfare support over two

Herrick deployments); the FOST MPV team (for their success in support to Operation Kipion in the Gulf theatre); the Naval Families federation (for their "highly-valued contribution to the wellbeing of Naval Service personnel and their families"); Hiltrud Steel (for outstanding efforts in switching the RN Medical Service to the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server system); and Lt Michael Hawkes (as the driving force behind RN snowboarding).

Next class of Junglies graduates

NINE new aviators from the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) were awarded their coveted wings on graduating from 848 Naval Air Squadron at RN Air Station Yeovilton.

The ceremony was the culmination of years of hard work, and was the final hurdle in their flying training before becoming fully-qualified aircrew.

Trophies were awarded to acknowledge particular individual achievements during training, this year presented by the recently-retired guest of honour Rear Admiral Charlier, himself an experienced helicopter pilot.

The Westland Prize for best overall student was presented to S/Lt Simon Jones, while the Bill Murton Trophy for best Commando aviation ethos went to Lt Tom Morris.

The Bill Murton Trophy is named after a distinguished CHF pilot, killed in a flying accident in 2003.

For the graduating pilots, the ceremony and award of their wings marks the end of three years of flying training.

Initial flying grading assessments, lasting two weeks, are followed by flying fixed-wing training aircraft at RAF Barkston Heath in Lincolnshire.

They then spend six months flying basic Squirrel helicopters at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire before being chosen for their final operational aircraft types.

For Commando-role students this involves eight months with 848 NAS, converting to the Sea King Mk 4 helicopter and learning the operational tactics that will enable them to operate in any environment and operational theatre, day or night.

The five Commando Aircrewmen have undergone similarly rigorous training, initially with four weeks of aviation military skills training at RAF Henlow and RAF St Mawgan, then five weeks initial flying grading, five weeks basic ground school and seven weeks navigation instruction at RAF Shawbury, followed by four weeks winchman training at RAF Valley.

Cpl Stuart Pirie RM was awarded the 'Doc' Love Trophy for the best overall student on course. This trophy is named in honour of a Commando Aircrewman killed during the Falklands Conflict.

The graduates will now join 845 Naval Air Squadron, the front line Commando Sea King Squadron which is on five days' notice to move anywhere in the world.

The origins of the Commando Helicopter Force lie in Naval ship-to-shore helicopter operations in the jungles of Malaya during the 1963 Malayan Conflict, giving them their nickname the Junglies.

■ Junglies return to Borneo – p16

Moving on from the West Country

TWO senior Royal Naval figures in the South West have moved on from their high-profile posts.

The RN's head of training Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone has piloted some major changes through on his watch as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST).

The admiral moves on from his headquarters at Plymouth to become Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Policy at MOD in London.

Among the changes were the development of initial naval training at establishments such as HMS Raleigh in Torpoint,

with newly-extended courses being underpinned by nine core maritime skills.

The facilities now also exist to conduct on-shore training with a ship's crew while running a realistic war exercise at sea, linking the two locations remotely.

A major physical change has been the building of Royal Marines Tamar – the headquarters for all landing craft training, with 539 Squadron moving from Turnchapel in Plymouth this year.

Rear Admiral Johnstone said: "I am very proud of what has been achieved over the past two years and of my extraordinary military and civilian workforce."

"I will miss the sea, wonderful light, and warmth of the people of Plymouth."

Rear Admiral Ben Key has taken over as FOST.

A little further west, Capt Willie Entwisle marked his last day in charge of HMS Seahawk in agricultural fashion.

Engineers and aircrew from



● Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone leaves his post as Flag Officer Sea Training, to warm applause from his staff

across RN Air Station Culdrose, as well as civilian staff, gathered to cheer off Capt Entwisle.

And his mode of transport? A combine harvester, which took him on a final tour of Culdrose and along the main runway.

The CO had an interesting 18 months in charge, including the arrival of the Olympic torch from Greece last summer, the deployment of Merlins and Sea Kings to provide support for the

Olympics, and the resurfacing of the main runway.

"It's been a great honour to have commanded RNAS Culdrose, working with aviators, engineers and civilians," said Capt Entwisle.

"Not everyone gets to run their own Royal Navy air station – I feel immensely proud to have done so."

Capt Entwisle, who is moving on to the MOD in London, is succeeded by former Lynx pilot Capt Mark Garratt.



● Capt Willie Entwisle is driven along the runway at RNAS Culdrose in a combine harvester

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron



Chaplain travels to the West

THE newly-appointed Muslim civilian chaplain to the Armed Forces has paid his first visit to the Royal Navy in the South West. Imam Ali Omar (above), who is based in Wellington Barracks in London, works in a tri-Service capacity and travelled to the West Country to learn more about the Royal Navy and to develop links with the naval chaplaincy service and other agencies.

His trip began at Britannia Royal Naval College, where he also met a number of Muslim international officer cadets and saw training on the River Dart.

Having expressed an interest in submarines, Imam Ali's visit to Devonport included a tour of former operational submarine Courageous, now a museum.

He also went onboard frigate HMS Somerset, where he met various members of the ship's company, from the CO to young junior ratings.

Imam Ali's host in Devonport, the Rev David Roissetter, said Imam Ali was "particularly struck with the technical complexities of a modern warship, the professionalism and maturity of the younger sailors, and the strong sense of teamwork which together enable the Royal Navy to serve the country's interests."

The final day of the visit saw Imam Ali attend a passing out parade at HMS Raleigh, which celebrated the completion of training for the latest group of Royal Navy recruits.

He was also able to meet with a member of the Muslim faith who is currently undergoing training at the establishment.

Imam Ali is one of five civilian chaplains who represent the non-Christian major world religions – there are also chaplains for the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Jewish faith groups.

They are civilian chaplains employed by the MOD to provide pastoral support to serving members of their faith community and to provide general advice to the Armed Services on matters relating to their faith.

Sue's Naval perspective

NOTTINGHAM may be a long way from the sea, but the city's contribution to Armed Forces Day on June 29 will have its fair share of Royal Navy input.

And that is because one of the people helping to organise the national event this year spent time in the Andrew.

Sue Dewey was born and educated in Nottingham before 'running away to sea', joining the WRNS as a Stenographer in 1977.

After basic training at Dauntless and Chatham, postings included Yeovilton, NATO's SHAPE HQ in Belgium and MOD in London.

On leaving the Service, she returned to Nottingham and has had a varied career, including sales, marketing, and event and project management, working across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

Sue has been a volunteer with local charities for many years – she has been chairman of Nottingham Sea Cadets since 1995 and chairman of the Eastern Area (comprising 60 units) for the past 14 years, winning an OBE for her work in 2006.

She also, *inter alia*, sits on the National Sea Cadet Advisory Council, and is a member of the East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

Large-scale events hold no fears – Sue project-managed the first ever classical concert at Nottingham Arena, worked with major sponsors at the Ryder Cup 2002 at The Belfry, and organised a year-long programme marking the Science Museum Centenary.

On her role of Veterans Co-ordinator, Sue said: "As

TRAINEE submariners from HMS Raleigh joined the Rame Peninsula community in the Herculean task of 'banishing the winter's gloom and welcoming the summer's glory'.

The six recruits carried a flower-decorated model ship in

the annual Black Prince Flower Procession through the villages of Millbrook, Kingsand and Cawsand, during the May Day celebration.

Following just behind the Millbrook Town Crier and his lady, the sailors were at the head of a procession made up of

dancers, musicians, visiting town criers, local children and villagers.

Warfare Specialist Samuel Ellerington said: "We're proud and we most certainly feel privileged to have been included in such an important day for these local communities

"The boat itself is quite heavy, but fortunately I've got someone taller than me in front to take the strain..."

This was among the last duties for the fledgling submariners before they leave Torpoint for their submarine qualifying course at Devonport or Faslane in Scotland depending on the class of submarine each recruit joins.

● Trainee submariners carry the Black Prince through Millbrook during the May Day festival

Picture: Dave Sherfield



Motor on show

PORTSMOUTH-based warship HMS Dauntless celebrated its affiliation with sports car manufacturer the Caterham Group by inviting its employees on board.

Several staff from the Norfolk company were given a tour of the Type 45 destroyer as part of Affiliates Day – and in return they brought a Caterham Super 7 car to allow sailors a closer look.

Dauntless is twinned with Great Yarmouth, and since being launched in 2007 has built up strong links with the wider region.

CO Cdr Adrian Fryer (pictured) said: "Days like this provide a great opportunity for us to show off our ship to those who help support us so well whilst we're away."

"Caterham Group have been strong supporters of the ship over a number of years, and the friendships and understanding we have for each other is only

strengthened through conducting affiliation visits like this.

"We are extremely happy to host them as a British 'cutting edge' company aboard our 'cutting edge' ship."

Dauntless was presented with a Formula 1 car front winglet which will be displayed on board.

Mike Gascoyne, Caterham Group Chief Technical Officer, said: "It's great for the Caterham Group that we can have an affiliation with HMS Dauntless and use it as an opportunity to consider mutual areas of technical interest based around high-performance engineering."

Dauntless's maiden deployment last year saw her clock up 30,000 miles visiting 18 countries across four continents, and this year she has been carrying out aviation trials, squeezing in trips to Great Yarmouth and Newcastle.



a Nottingham lass and a former serving member of the Forces I am proud to be working with the city council and the MOD to help deliver Armed Forces Day 2013.

"Hats off to our Heroes' is a wonderful chance for the community to say thank you to those individuals, past and present, who have put their lives on the line for all that we hold dear in the UK.

"It is also a tremendous opportunity for Nottinghamshire to show off its fine military heritage on the national stage.

"I am currently working with veterans' groups and military charities from across the region and nationally, to ensure that the day is representative of the contribution made by regulars and reservists from all three Services.

"In my spare time, and wearing a different hat, as chairman of Nottingham Sea Cadets I am also delighted that cadet organisations in the county will be included in the day, along with young people from various local community groups.

"It promises to be a spectacular event and I am looking forward to it tremendously."

Although Nottingham is landlocked, Sue is from a family with salt water running in their veins.

Her father, Peter Bentley, was an FAA electrical artificer, brother-in-law Paul (Hector) Heathcote was a Jungle pilot in 845 NAS and a Falklands/Gulf War veteran, and nephew Jamie Heathcote is currently a warfare officer in the Submarine Service.

Reuben wins solo prize

A TRAINEE flautist with the Royal Marines School of Music has won a prestigious solo prize.

Musn Reuben Hanna, aged 20, has been named RM Young Musician of the Year following the contest, open to all trainees at the Portsmouth-based school.

Reuben impressed the judges with his renditions of *Fantasia Hongroise* by Franz Doppler and *Tuberama* by Ian Clarke.

A total of 45 musicians entered the competition, with six winning through to the final, which was open to the public and held at the RM Museum in Southsea.

Musn Hanna said: "There was a large audience which was not good for the nerves at first, but in another way it made the whole

experience more enjoyable.

"I had been practising the pieces for a few months and just hoped to play to the best of my abilities on the night.

"Winning was a bonus and I am looking forward to continuing my studies at the school before passing out next year.

Musn Hanna joined the Service in 2011, and will complete his training in August 2014, joining one of the five RM bands.

As well as being world-class musicians, members of the RM Band Service are also trained to support military and humanitarian operations around the world, acting as casualty handlers, drivers, radio operators and convoy protection.

Service rewarded

A LONG-serving chief petty officer currently serving in HMS Enterprise has been recognised for his outstanding operational service.

CPO(ET) Richmond Nisbet was presented with the Worshipful Company of Cutlers' annual award by Capt Steve Malcolm, Hydrographer of the Navy and Captain HM, during the ship's visit to Muscat.

The Worshipful Company of Cutlers has been affiliated to Enterprise since the ship was commissioned in 2003, and a tankard is awarded annually to an outstanding individual.

CPO Nisbet is Head of the Hull Group in the Marine Engineering department, and has given up spare time to run the ship's canteen.

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Mystery caption

I CAN solve a mystery for you!

The colour photograph shown in April's IWM Photographic Memories (p12) was taken aboard HMS Scylla in July 1943 on which my father, the then PO Leslie Slade, was serving, and indeed he is the petty officer with his back to the camera – or so he said.

We had a copy of the photo at home when I was a boy – and I still have it.

Scylla was escorting a convoy along the Iberian coast and they had on board the photographer Heywood Magee.

His series of images taken on that convoy were part of a portfolio for *Time Life*.

Pictured is a copy of the image which appears in their book

World War II – The Mediterranean, published by Time Life Books in 1981.

The scene is exactly the same except that there is a slight change of position of the personnel in the foreground and the ships appear to be going in different directions.

I guess the image was reversed somewhere along the line.

My father served from 1929–56 and was on Scylla from the time she was first commissioned until she was brought back to the UK, her quarterdeck awash having been mined off the D-Day Beaches. She was subsequently declared a constructive total loss and scrapped in 1950.

– David Slade
Littlehampton

Harvesting medals

SOME 35 years ago, I was on HMS Endurance, guard ship and Ice Patrol Vessel for the Falklands and Antarctica.

At a time when there seems to be a medal harvest around, how about a medal for those of us who patrolled the Arctic and the Antarctic in survey ships?

Not to mention those who served in the Baltic in submarines during the Cold War?

Why leave it 70 years?

– P Fox
Ramsgate, Kent

Flight deck treble in '81

The hosting of the three helicopters by HMS Dauntless (*Global reach – D33 becomes R33*) is not unique for a surface escort.

While serving in HMS Battleaxe in 1981, we had two Lynx helicopters in the hangar, one of our own and one from RNAS Yeovilton, as well as the Lynx from Broadsword while undertaking multiple helicopter handling trials in the SW approaches.

Cosy, but manageable!

– Carl Graham
Bishops Waltham, Hants

A tale of two Duncans

I READ with interest your article on HMS Duncan in April's edition of the *Navy News*, as she arrived in Portsmouth; it brought back memories from the past.

I too served on HMS Duncan (the smaller version) back in 1963, joining her at Rosyth as a JME straight from Ganges.

She was 'Captain F' of the Fishery Protection Squadron, and I arrived just as the Cod War was winding up, and the Cold war was ongoing.

My Duncan displaced 1,456 tons, her speed was 28 knots with a range of 4,000 miles at 12 knots.

She only had the one shaft, but for her size she could move; she was built for anti-submarine warfare, with two 40mm Bofors and two triple-barrelled mortars.

The Stoker's Mess was aft, next to the tiller flat, but only the leading hands had bunks – the rest of us slept in hammocks; when you think what the seas were like off Iceland, we had the best deal.

Messing arrangements were just a case of the duty cook going forward to the galley and collecting all the food for the lads and dishing it out in the mess deck.

I recall when the weather was really bad, we couldn't reach the galley by going along the upper

deck as we would normally, so a line was laid along the superstructure gantry.

We had to cling to the line otherwise there was a chance of being washed overboard with little chance of being picked up in the dark – that's if you didn't freeze to death in the water.

Looking at today's Duncan she must be massive.

We had a complement of 140 against her 190, so I guess the lads and lassies will have lots of space to move around in.

I would have thought her pennant number would have been the same as the old Duncan, but with a D instead of an F. Do we know if she will be at Portsmouth for Navy Days this year?

I too have Royal Navy cigarettes from the past – I am 67 next year and left the Navy in 1973. I keep them as a reminder not to start smoking again.

– John Pittock,
Steeton, West Yorkshire
Editor's Note: On Armed Forces Day weekend, June 29-30 2013, a Daring-class destroyer and Type 23 frigate are due to be open to visitors in Portsmouth. Ships availability will be subject to operational commitments. Check the Royal Navy website at www.royalnavy.mod.uk for the latest details.

Affray's four Lochs

I HAVE just read the very good article in the April edition of *Navy News* on the search for HMS Affray, but I must ask, yet again, the question I have asked many times before: why is no mention ever made of the ships that actually made the first contact with the sunken vessel?

I refer, of course, to the four Loch-class frigates – HM Ships Loch Alvie, Loch Killisport, Loch Fyne and Loch Insh.

All spent quite a few weeks on the search.

We used to spend the week at sea, searching, and the weekend in Portsmouth.

I was on Loch Alvie at the time and remember spending the last weekend of the search laying over the site of the disaster.

To help pass the off-duty time we used hundreds of rounds of small arms ammunition, firing at a fixed floating object about 50 yards off our stern.

Loch Alvie was detailed to stay over the site for the weekend as apparently we were the ship that

made the first actual contact.

The other three frigates returned to Portsmouth while we waited for HMS Reclaim to come out on Monday morning to confirm the find.

So, in all the articles you see about the search, HMS Reclaim is credited with finding the Affray.

After the Reclaim confirmed

that what we had found was actually the Affray we returned to Portsmouth, overnight leave was given and the next day we sailed for Londonderry.

I am sure these facts could somehow be verified and I would think that old ships' logs are retained by the Admiralty even after 60-plus years, and should be

available under the Freedom of Information Act.

– D J West

Ramsgate, Kent

Editor's note: Several ships, including HM Ships Loch Fyne and Loch Insh, made claims that they were the first to make contact with the Affray – do any readers have official proof?

Hands to ears, mufflers ordered

REGARDING the letter from Vic Everest in the February edition of *Navy News* – *Naval fire in the '50s gave me gunner's ear*:

My National Service lasted from March 25 1957 to March 24 1959 and I was SA(S).

From January 2 1958 to February 22 1959 I worked in the Naval Stores Office onboard the Sea Slug sea-to-air guided missile trials ship HMS Girdle Ness, the ship being based in Malta for approximately six months from May to Nov '58.

I was often closed-up for a missile launch in the forward damage control area, directly below the launcher, that was on the foc'sle, as I had all the naval store keys with me.

I still remember the terrific noise as a missile was launched.

If crew members weren't required to be closed-up you could view a launch but you had to be a certain distance back and also cover your ears to protect them because of the extreme noise.

I am certain that it was whilst we were in Malta that I had to order ear mufflers.

Not only did they cut out the noise of the launch but I am sure you could carry on talking to a person near you.

Would this be the first time that ear mufflers were ordered for the RN?

Possibly another first – as a launch was being prepared, the pipe was "Hands to Missile Stations".

– David M Tolson
Rillington, Malton

– Vic Everest
Cheshunt, Hertfordshire

Five-star service with Arctic medal

MY uncle Tom McLaren, who is suffering from terminal lung cancer, served on HMS Dido from 1944 to 1946, taking part in naval operations in support of the allied invasions of Sicily, Southern France, Salerno and Anzio, before heading north to take part in the Arctic convoys.

I recently applied, on his behalf, to the MOD Medal Office for the newly-approved Arctic Star, and was very grateful when they contacted me by telephone to provide an update on the progress of the application and assurance that they would be despatching his medal as soon as

the first batch of Arctic Stars was received from the manufacturer.

I am pleased to say that the medal arrived the following week and I had it mounted alongside his existing 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star with bar 'France and Germany', Italy Star, Pacific Star and 1939-45 War Medal, and he received his newly mounted group quickly thereafter.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the staff of the MOD Medal Office for expediting the issue of the Arctic Star to ensure that my uncle would receive it in time.

– Major K M Belam
BFPO 801



Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Maj Belam.

Tiddly Jack

As with many other ex-Navy men, my old shipmates and I keep in touch and one subject comes up time after time: where do today's matelots get those terrible caps?

Is there no individuality or desire for style?

Oh, it must be agreed that they are uniform, but uniformly awful!

What happened to the stylish 'Bow Wave' and 'tiddly' look of 'Jack me Ticker Tin'?

In days of yore (I joined in 1954) the Liberty Boat Inspection was like a fashion parade, everyone as smart as paint, but individuals, not like some crate of milk churns as we see today.

During my time in the Navy the uniform changed from being the 'over the head' tunic and five or seven creased 'Bell Bottoms' to the shapeless jacket arrangement that seems to have survived into today's Navy. It seems that individuality has been completely banned from the Navy. How sad.

The figure-hugging tunic and 'bells' looked good but today's uniform seems to be neither one thing nor the other, and certainly does not look so smart, especially when a webbing belt has to be worn on it.

The whole thing looks like a sack tied up in the middle. The old uniform was practical in that when it was taken off and rolled up, it took up little space in a locker, plus having been stowed this way was ready pressed when unrolled. But most of all it was 'tiddly' – it was smart and it was 'Jack.'

– J W Sexton Ex FCMEMN(P)
Preston

Impressive bearing

LIKE millions of others, I watched the procession of Baroness Thatcher through the streets of London on April 17.

I was enormously impressed by the able seaman who marched on the left side of the coffin.

He was dedicated to his job and, I expect, impressed all the people who watched him throughout the march – he was calm, looked neither left or right, but straight ahead.

He was named in *The Times* as AB Thomas Baker.

Surely his bearing throughout is worthy of him being illustrated in a copy of *Navy News*.

He is the only one of the party not to have any medal.

– John Physick (ex PO),
Kent

Editor's Note: Eagle-eyed readers will have spotted AB Baker in May's edition of *Navy News* (p5) published just before we received John's letter.

Pensions dismay could be avoided

PAUL RUSSELL was taken by surprise when his Armed Forces pension was reduced by £16 a month on reaching 65 (letters *Navy News*, April 2013).

I expect he is not alone in his dismay; but it need not have been so.

Had he been a member of the Forces Pension Society (FPS), and had he read the leaflet we publish on our website (in the members' area) and spoken to our pension expert, he would have known exactly what to expect.

This leaflet is five pages of great detail, impossible to summarise clearly in a brief response.

However the underlying reason is that this small abatement of the pension is a legal provision imposed under the National Insurance Act of 1946 and it affects all Servicemen and women who enlisted after 1949 (that means most of us).

It is to take account of National Insurance retirement benefits available at state retirement age and applies throughout the public sector, unless you reside permanently outside the UK when it (sometimes) does not apply.

Like almost everything else about pensions this is a very complex area and needs expert explanation.

The FPS publish other similar leaflets in the members' area covering the more complex Armed

Forces pension issues, but one size does not fit all in pension terms and your benefits depend on your individual circumstances, so we urge people to join the Society then get in touch with us if they have any such queries that need an explanation.

When you leave the RN the one tangible thing you take with you is your pension, and the older you get the more significant that pension becomes for you and your spouse or partner.

The only place you can get deep, independent, expert advice on all aspects of your Armed Forces Pension is the FPS. I urge everyone reading this to consider joining our steadily increasing membership (currently 43,000).

You may not have a problem or query today but you might one day and so might your partner after you have gone deep.

At the very least take a good look at www.forcespensionsociety.org. If Mr Russell goes on-line (or telephones) and joins up he can give our expert a call and get an explanation in full. He did not mention the Guaranteed Minimum Pension adjustment that occurs at the same time too and is likely to have a greater effect on his RN pension – but that is another matter.

– Malcolm Farrow OBE
Capt RN – Asst General Secretary,
Forces Pension Society



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The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUBB



Traumatic licence

I READ the article *Hood Footage made me fume* (February edition) written by Andy Field and I entirely agree with what he said.

I watched the documentary and I was disappointed to be 'fobbed off' with clips of battleships that were clearly not HMS Hood.

If it had been a film then I could have accepted the dramatic licence often used, but I always understood that documentaries should be factual and accurate.

You wouldn't have a documentary of a Spitfire then use clips of other aircraft so why do producers think it's acceptable when the documentary is about a specific ship.

No Andy, you are not 'Mr Angry, a Navy Nerd', just someone like the rest of us that thinks that if you are going to reflect on history then please do it right, or not at all.

— Graham Knight
Kidderminster, Worcestershire

A stern talking to

SOME time ago, I took *Navy News* to task for referring to the 'floor' and 'ceiling' of a ship's compartment when you really meant 'deck' and 'deckhead'.

In your article, *The Allez Cat returns* you talk of aircraft operating from the 'back' of the French frigate *Surcouf*.

Surely you mean the stern – or whatever that is in French!

As I live in Nelson's county, I do like to hear 'proper' Navy talk!

— C B Bramzell
Ex Leading Wireman MS (1942-46) Hunstanton

Ironsides (Afloat)

I WOULD like to add a little something to the statement made on page 15 of February's *Navy News* regarding HMS *Victory* being the oldest commissioned ship in the world.

As everyone knows, this is correct, but last year I was visiting Boston, Massachusetts, and was surprised to find, on my way around their Navy's dockyard museum in Charlestown, that the Americans have the same statement relating to one of their ships, similar to HMS *Victory*.

I had a tour around the ship conducted by enlisted USN sailors. However their statement is correct, but they have one extra word and that is 'afloat', and she is apparently 215 years old.

The name of the ship is USS *Constitution*, and she is affectionately known as 'Old Ironsides'.

She was most famous for her part in the war of 1812 against Great Britain, and on August 19 2012 she was actually under sail again.

I was told that she is moved around the harbour twice a year and takes visitors for the ride.

— Trevor Andrew-Gernand
Telford, Shropshire

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the



permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



● Survey Ships HMS Echo, Egeria and Enterprise alongside in Devonport around 1984

Why not an Egeria?

HEAR, hear... Lt Cdr Tony Fletcher – re why not an Egeria? (January p24).

Yes – I served on Egeria when we surveyed the Sound of Jura 1962-63.

A wonderful peaceful way of spending 11 weeks up on the west coast of Scotland.

Yes – we were very proud to be part of the three white survey boats; Echo, Enterprise and Egeria.

Our survey season ended in 1963 with a trip to Duisberg up the Rhine, where we were very

well received.

Always wearing our submarine sweaters, the public were delighted when seeing us tie up after a day's surveying, wherever our skipper managed to get us a berth, whether it be Ramsgate, Yarmouth or even on one occasion, during a holiday stopover, in sunny Southend itself.

Yes – why not another Egeria – one of my favourite cap tallies that I wore during my time in the Andrew.

— Doug Ballands
Bishop's Stortford, Herts

Secret swarm control?

WITH reference to the excellent cover photograph of the May edition of *Navy News* – HMS *Diamond*.

As an 'ex-G' of a previous Daring, HMS *Diana*, I would have been most concerned had my main and small calibre armament not been trained on, or at least towards, the approaching 'swarm'.

Here the 4.5in is trained forward and close range with covers on.

Do the T45s have some secret 'swarm control netting' that we retirees know nothing about?

— Cdr Nick Wright
Bridgwater



Flying tea-boat

MANY thanks for the excellent article on the Battle of Atlantic in the May edition of *Navy News*.

Whilst I realise that your paper focuses on the Royal Navy and naval events, you may be interested in my Dad's involvement.

He was in 10 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force flying Sunderland flying boats from Plymouth, Pembroke Dock and Oban, and our son, Lt Sam Hodgkinson RN, is a pilot currently seconded to RAF Benson flying Merlin Mk3s.

My Dad, the late Wg Cdr Vic Hodgkinson DFC, was sent with other members of 10 Squadron to the UK in 1939 to collect a squadron of Sunderland flying boats which had been ordered by the Australian government.

When they arrived in the UK and were undergoing training, the Australian government donated the entire squadron to the war effort over here and it was based at Plymouth, operating in the Med, the Bay of Biscay and over the Atlantic.

Amongst their numbers was

the French pilot of the folding sea plane from French submarine *Surcouf* which he had flown to the UK.

In addition to English, he soon learnt a full repertoire of Australian swear words!

The photo (above) shows my Dad drinking from a china cup whilst flying.

The Sunderlands frequently went out on long patrols over the Atlantic and many crews failed to return.

The flying boats were equipped with stoves so that hot meals could be produced.

The crews took great pride in 'borrowing' complete, matching sets of crockery and cutlery from hotels in their base locations, and my Dad's crew got most upset one day when a stray bullet smashed the sugar bowl.

He returned to Australia in 1942 and served in the Pacific, flying a variety of British, American and German (Dornier Do24) flying boats.

— Richard Hodgkinson
Chandler's Ford, Hants



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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Woking hold St George's Day parade

WOKING branch have held their annual St George's Day Parade with a march through Old Woking High Street for a service at the ancient Church of St Peter's.

The march was led by 15 standards of various local veterans' associations, of which three were national standards – the Fleet Air Arm, Merchant Navy Greenwich College and HMS Glory Association.

Sea Cadets from Woking unit joined the parade, and as one standard bearer was sick Cadet Robin Eladias volunteered to carry the Union Standard at the last moment.

This was the first time he had carried a standard, and after a very brief period of training he did "an excellent job".

On arrival at the church prior to the service the standard bearers formed a guard of honour to greet the Mayor and Mayoress of Woking, Cllr Mike and Ann Smith.

The service was led by Canon Peter Thompson, and readings were delivered by Cllr Smith and the chairman of the association, S/M Ian Fraser.

The Ladies Blesley Choir, as always, ably led the singing.

Following the service the Mayor inspected the standard bearers and commented on their fine turn-out.

Funeral for X-craft man

A WARTIME submariner who devoted much of his life to a Sea cadet unit in the Midlands has died at the age of 87.

S/M Keith Hornby Priestnall joined the Royal Navy and eventually served in X-craft – midget submarines – during the war, including at least one mission against German ships in Norway and preparatory work for the D-Day Landings.

He left the Service shortly after the war, with the rank of lieutenant commander, and by 1950 had become Commanding Officer at Burton Sea cadet unit – an organisation he was to be involved in for 60 years.

Lt Cdr Priestnall also had close business links with Burton's famous brewing industry; he set up a company producing beer mats – and was instrumental in the creation of a national museum of brewing in Burton.

Former Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar delivered a eulogy at the funeral of Lt Cdr Priestnall, who died on February 16.

Wildfire parade

THE annual Wildfire III parade and service hosted by Queenborough and District Naval Ensign Association at Queenborough will be held on the 8th September at Queenborough, Kent.

The parade will muster outside Queenborough Church at 1.30pm with the service in the park at 2pm.

For further details please contact Janet on 01795229338 or e mail janet.flew@btinternet.com

GI baby finds family across the Atlantic

A RECENT trip across the Atlantic by RNA National Chairman S/M Chris Dovey saw him return home with more than the usual clutch of souvenirs.

Chris came back with a whole new family...

Chris was what came to be known as a GI baby – the result of a liaison between his mother and an American serviceman stationed nearby at Ludlow in Shropshire.

The couple met at a dance in the spring of 1944, but his father's unit moved suddenly, secretly and without warning in May 1944, part of the preparations for the Normandy Landings.

Chris was born on St Valentine's Day in 1945, but knew little about his father other than a name – Edgar Householder – and the fact that he was with a US Army Air Force unit.

"I have been trying to trace my father over the last 40 years without success, being ignored initially on three occasions," said Chris.

One day, commuting home, he heard a radio programme about GI babies which referred to an organisation called TRACE (Trans Atlantic Children's Enterprise), so Chris pulled over into a layby and scribbled down the details.

Through TRACE he was put in touch with a research officer at the US Military Archives in St Louis.

"I found six names that matched my father's, but none were either the right age or were part of an Air Force unit, and no record could be found of one being stationed in Shropshire in 1944," he said.

"However, I was told that the St Louis Archives suffered a major fire in 1973 and just over a third of their records were lost. It was probable that the records I needed were destroyed in that fire.

"I felt like I had hit the buffers



● S/M Chris Dovey (left) as a 24-year old lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and his father, Edgar Householder, at the age of 20

again."

One possible line of enquiry arose when Chris's wife saw an article in a newspaper about an American plane which had crashed into the Mediterranean off Italy in February 1944 and the wreckage had been found.

One of the crew was named Householder, but his first name was Robert, so that was that.

He continued with his attempts to trace his father, but with no luck – until early this year.

"In late January this year I was doing some research on the internet for a friend who was trying to trace a former US Navy colleague.

"I came across a website I had not encountered before and got some useful information.

"Having got what I needed for my friend I tried putting in my father's name.

"Up popped two names in Fort Collins, Colorado, with addresses about 12 miles apart.

"One, Edgar Householder Snr, was 88, born April 23 1924, which was the right age for my father as my mother told me he was almost exactly the same age as her (born



April 14 1924) and he had been an air mechanic.

"The other, Edgar Jnr (Ed) was 61, and I guessed was probably the son.

"I wrote to him, partly because I didn't know if the elder was still alive, but also that if he was it might come as a shock me writing to him if he was my father.

"I had a very supportive letter back from the son saying his father had died in 2001 but they were intrigued by my story and would help in any way they could – and he actually sent some photos and service documents of his Dad's."

Ed said some of Chris's information chimed in with that his father had told him, which encouraged Chris to investigate further.

"My wife and I had already booked to spend five weeks in Toronto with our son James and his family, so I arranged to fly down to Colorado with my son," he said.

"He had been working in Canada for ten years and had also tried searching for my father through American contacts.

"We had a great three days with the Householder family and on

the first full day there Edgar Jnr – Ed – agreed to do a sibling DNA test with me.

"I had the results one week later and we have identical Y chromosome genes, which only come down through the paternal line.

"I now have a legal document stating that Ed and I are half brothers.

"During our visit Ed took us around to meet the wider family and also took me to his father's grave – also my father's grave, as it later transpired.

"Alongside was the grave of his brother, one Robert Householder who was killed on Valentine's Day 1944 – one year exactly before I was born – in a plane crash in the Mediterranean off Italy.

"If only we had followed up that newspaper article..."

"Ed and I have kept in touch since, and also with a half-sister, and their children, and we plan to develop our new-found family relationship with reciprocal visits between Colorado and UK.

"I also intend to apply for a US passport and to help my son qualify for one too as he spends at least two days a month flying to the States on business."

Chris is now looking forward to developing my American roots and introducing his half brother and sister to his four half brothers here.

"My only real sadness is that my mother died in 2009," he said.

"She always said my walk always reminded her of my father – a comment Ed made to me when we first met in Fort Collins as he had seen me walking into the Starbucks Café where we had agreed to meet up.

"She was married for 58 years to my stepfather Joe, who was a wonderful father to me, and even if Edgar Snr had still been alive he could never have taken away the love I had for Joe."



● Murray Haddow (ex-HMS Caprice) receives his Arctic Star from Rear Admiral Chris Hockley, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland

Veterans return to Wester Ross

FORTY Arctic Convoy veterans travelled to Wester Ross to receive their Arctic Star medals – and were overwhelmed with the welcome they received from the local community.

The survivors of "the worst journey in the world" could not speak too highly of their gratitude for what was a memorable and enjoyable visit to the place where their wartime journeys to Russia began.

Talking over the microphone at the 'Meet the Veterans' event at Aultbea Village Hall, 89-year-old Gordon Grayson from Sheffield praised the organisation and the warm welcome given to all of his fellow veterans.

"We are all hugely impressed with our visit back to Loch Ewe and cannot thank you enough for the kindness and hospitality shown – and particularly all the local volunteers who have made this a truly memorable occasion for us all," he said.

The Memorial Service at Cove was attended by the greatest number of visitors ever to the site of the Russian Arctic Convoy memorial stone at the mouth of Loch Ewe, with the medal ceremony following at Poolewe Village Hall.

The packed audience witnessed the official presentation of the Arctic Star medal by the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Janet Bowen, Defence Minister Mark Francois, Keith Brown, Scottish Minister of Veterans, and Rear Admiral Chris Hockley, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland.

The event was part of a week-long programme put together by Jacky Brookes, of the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum Project, who said she was delighted with the success of the initiative.

See next month's *Navy News* for more details of the Wester Ross gathering.

Strait Street examined

STRAIT Street. The Gut.

Names from a thoroughfare in Malta that are redolent of another time, another Royal Navy.

These bywords for hedonism form the subject matter for a new book by Dr John Schofield and Emily Morrissey; *Strait Street – Malta's 'Red-Light District' Revealed*.

Dr Schofield, Head of the Department of Archaeology and Director of Studies, Cultural Heritage Management, at the University of York, said: "Straight Street (and especially that part known as The Gut) divides opinion, just as it has always done.

"Drawing on original research, a new study takes an 'archaeological approach' to the street, drawing away its many layers of social and political complexity to reveal the hidden histories that lie beneath the surface.

"This is also a study in cultural heritage: what the place represents today, and what it meant to people in the past."

Part of the original research was gathered through a request for information in *Navy News*.

In their closing statement, the authors assert that Strait Street and The Gut, in Valletta, were always "marginal places", but hope their book's approach can help promote "the acceptance of Strait Street and the hope that one day it will live again as a



● Straight from the Gut – echoes of the past survive in Valletta, Malta

marginal environment, vital and sustainable, as a lively, chaotic, and colourful place – Valletta's beating heart, but this time for the benefit of all."

The book can be ordered from Midsea Press (Malta) at www.midseabooks.com/publications_detail.aspx?pid=13479 for a price of 22 Euros.

Plymouth plea

AN ONLINE petition has been launched to try to prevent the scrapping of the former HMS Plymouth.

The Rothesay-class frigate, which was in the thick of the action during the Falklands Conflict, had been used as a museum ship in Glasgow and Merseyside, but in recent years her future has been increasingly clouded by doubt – until it was announced last year that she would be scrapped.

The petition can be found at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk>

Drake and Raleigh

MEMBERS of the HMS Impregnable/HMS Drake Association paid a visit to HMS Raleigh as part of their annual reunion in Plymouth.

The members, who all served at the shore establishment located at the old St Budeaux Barracks in Plymouth, were treated to a tour of the RN Submarine School.

They also joined families and friends of the latest recruits to complete the ten-week intensive initial naval training course, to watch the passing-out parade.

The visit brought back fond memories for former CPO Tom Cochrane, who met his late wife Edith at HMS Raleigh.

Edith was a member of the WRNS and worked as a chef in the galley.

Tom said: "She was serving the

meals and I took a fancy to her.

"I was sent to the Mediterranean for two-and-a-half years and I wrote to her every day. We had many years of happiness together."

Originally wooden training hulks moored in the Hamoaze, in 1936, HMS Impregnable was established as a shore base and was used to train Royal Navy Signalmen during World War 2.

Later it became an accommodation centre for the WRNS, taking the name Drake.

Mary Haycock, association secretary, said: "Devonport is our base and we've been holding our reunions here for a number of years.

"We like to arrange something different for our members each time and someone suggested we come to HMS Raleigh."

RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

admin@royalnavalassoc.com

023 9272 3747

www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Naval Quirks



Photos tell of unlikely friendship

THE photograph album of a World War 1 Royal Navy submariner, recently obtained by the RN Submarine Museum, has revealed the mutual respect he shared with a former adversary.

Curators at the museum, in Gosport, discovered the friendship after taking possession of the album of Lt Cdr Samuel Gravener, CO of HMS E2.

Included were pictures of German submariner Fritz Boie.

More than 90 years ago, on April 29 1917, E2 was on patrol in the Mediterranean when she sighted UC37 preparing to destroy an Italian sailing ship of Marsala in Sicily.

E2's CO fired off a torpedo which hit the German boat but failed to detonate.

The Officer of the Watch on UC37 that day was Fritz Boie, and 14 years later he tracked down Gravener and sent him a letter which concluded: "So I send you now my kindest regards, hoping you are still alive and well off."

That was the start of an exchange of letters and family photos by the former foes.

The album has been put on temporary display.

For more details of the museum see www.submarine-museum.co.uk

New role for 'The Chief'

UXBRIDGE branch have a new president – 93-year-old S/M William 'The Chief' Mellow.

S/M Mellow joined the Royal Navy in 1936 at HMS Ganges as a Boy 2nd Class and left in 1963 as a chief petty officer.

During his career he twice returned to Ganges as an instructor, so the place is special to him – he is also a vice president of the HMS Ganges Association.

S/M Mellow took part in the Dieppe Raid, and attends the Newhaven anniversary every year.

Bourne share birthday lunch

BOURNE branch marked their 50th anniversary with a special lunch attended by more than 130 members and guests, including representatives from several Area 9 branches.

Also on the guest list was national president Vice Admiral John McAnally, who presented

Bourne branch president S/M Nobby Middleton with a certificate to mark the silver jubilee.

The diners sat down to a five-course meal, and enjoyed nautical-themed entertainment.

As a small branch, Bourne had offered to combine their celebration with Area 9

branches' annual lunch, which was well-organised by the branch president and a small committee.

S/M McAnally was also called on to make a presentation to the secretary of Ketton and District branch, S/M Mike Copeland, for keeping the branch afloat in difficult times.

Tall ship challenge for Liskeard pair

TWO disabled members of Liskeard branch have returned from a life-changing trip on board sail training ship Lord Nelson.

Lee Hayward and Terry Whitty had berths on the tall ship for part of its round-the-world voyage.

The Lord Nelson is one of two ships owned and managed by the Jubilee Sailing Trust which have been designed and built to accommodate disabled and able bodied sailors alike so they can sail together side by side – features include wider companionways for wheelchair users, lifts and stairlifts, a hearing loop and enhanced lighting.

Lee and Terry joined the ship in Cape Town to take part in the South African legs of her Sail the World Challenge.

Whilst in Cape Town they took the opportunity to meet up with fellow shipmates from Capetown branch, hosting them onboard the Lord Nelson.

From Cape Town the ship ventured back out into the Atlantic, hatches and wheelchairs well and truly battened down for what was to be a rough couple of days.

Next port of call was Simon's Town, where the South African Naval Base hosted the ship for an overnight stop.

Sea legs were swapped for land legs and normality reigned, at least until the ship sailed the



● Terry Whitty (left) and Lee Hayward in Cape Town with Alex Lochrane (centre), the Chief Executive Officer of the Jubilee Sailing Trust

following day.

Whilst there the pair visited the late Able Seaman Just Nuisance's statue – Just Nuisance was a Great Dane which looked after sailors.

From Simon's Town the Lord Nelson returned to Cape Town for a five day maintenance period along with a voyage crew change, after which it was off to Durban.

The first day out was flat calm, requiring the use of engines; day two was perfect sailing weather, and day three brought gale force nine winds.

Next stop was Port Elizabeth, outside which was the Schotia Safari Park, owned by two of the

voyage crew – so 30 of the ship's company went wildlife spotting.

Then on to Durban, where their arrival was again dogged by gales.

In Durban Lee and Terry left the Lord Nelson but not before hosting the local branch of the RNA on-board for a goodwill visit.

On completion of the visit S/M Denton Estment and his wife Lynda took Lee and Terry back to their home where they were hosted for the next five days.

Durban branch chairman S/M Allen Pembroke organised an itinerary of sightseeing visits, including the Durban Military Museum, where there are artefacts

from the Zulu Wars to present day.

Lee said: "We were both congratulated on our conduct on-board and have both been recommended to return to the JST Fleet as Watch Leaders – itself a real big honour."

The Lord Nelson is now on her way to India with over a year of sailing around the world in front of her.

Lee and Terry would like to thank Number 4 Area and the branches within the area for sponsoring them, allowing them to participate in the Jubilee Sailing Trust's Forces Rehabilitation Scheme.

Vindictive memorial unveiled

THE bow of an old Victorian cruiser has been renovated and was ready to be rededicated in Belgium as *Navy News* went to press.

HMS Vindictive was built in the last years of the 19th century and was considered obsolete by the start of World War 1.

However, specially fitted out with mortars and flame-throwers, the ship took part in the daring Zeebrugge Raid of St George's Day 1918, sustaining significant damage, and just over two weeks later she was sunk as a blockship in the second Ostend raid.

The wreck was raised and scrapped in 1920, but her bow was preserved as a memorial.

In recent years it had begun to deteriorate, but with expansion work planned for the harbour, the decision was made to move and refurbish the memorial.

One highlight of the programme in Ostend will be the inauguration of the new monument, in the presence of the King and Queen of Belgium.

Wreaths will also be laid at the Communal Cemetery in Stuiverstraat, location of the graves of several victims of the second Ostend raid.

Families of participants in the raid, and representatives of the Royal Navy and the British Embassy, were also due to attend the ceremonies.

Loch Fada celebration

MORE than 70 shipmates and guests gathered in Leicestershire for the 17th annual reunion (and 70th birthday celebrations) for HMS Loch Fada.

Highlights of the weekend, at the Sketchley Grange Hotel in Burbage, included the reunion dinner at which the last Commanding Officer of F390, Cdr Jeremy Rogerson (from 1967) presented a cake to AB Frank Cooper, a member of the ship's first commission of 1944-47 – Frank was celebrating his 87th birthday.

On the Sunday the shipmates went to the National Memorial Arboretum on a windy day – reminding some of the conditions they experienced while at sea...

Ceres event

MEMBERS of Wetherby branch attended the presentation of Lord Lieutenant's Certificates at a ceremony held at Ceres Division RNR, Carlton Barracks in Leeds.

The annual event saw the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Dr Ingrid Roscoe, make presentations to eight volunteers in recognition of their exceptional service to units of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations in Yorkshire and Humber.

Among the recipients was Lt Cdr (SCC) J Spinks RNR.

Illustrious date

THE annual memorial service organised by the HMS Illustrious Association in honour of the 29 sailors who died in the liberty boat disaster of 1948 will be held on October 12 at the memorial in Portland.

The incident saw a motor pinnace containing 51 libertymen from Illustrious sink in a storm-tossed Portland Harbour less than 100 metres from the ship on the night of October 17.

Memorial invite

MEMBERS of the public, schools and associations are invited to a service of remembrance at the South West Woodlands War Memorial at Thornbury in Bristol on Tuesday June 25.

The service is in honour of the men and women from the South West who lost their lives in the service of the nation since the turn of the millennium.

www.memorialwoodlands.com

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our April edition (right) was RFA Tidepool, which became the Almirante Jorge Montt when she was bought by the Chilean Navy.

Mr Swales, of Pudsey near Leeds, correctly identified the oiler and wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was launched by Fairfield at Govan in early 1944 but not commissioned until the summer of 1945 and saw no action in the war – although she was later reportedly rammed by a corvette.

(1) What was her name, and (2) what was the name of the corvette which rammed her in Plymouth in 1953?

We have removed her pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,



HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is July 12. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our August edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 220

Name

Address

My answers (1)

(2)

VC hero's memorial rededicated in Leith

A MEMORIAL to an heroic young Royal Marine who died saving his colleagues in the last weeks of World War 2 has been rededicated at the Ocean Terminal in Leith.

The monument is for Edinburgh man Thomas Peck Hunter, who won the Victoria Cross as a 'Hostilities Only' Commando on April 2 1945 during operations around Lake Comacchio in Italy.

Twice Hunter drew heavy fire from German positions to enable his troop to achieve their objectives.

On the second occasion, lying on a pile of rubble in full view of the enemy pillboxes and firing a Bren gun, Hunter was fatally wounded.

At 21 he was the youngest Marine ever to be awarded the highest accolade for bravery, and the only Corps recipient of the medal during World War 2.

A memorial was first erected in his name in 2002, but was moved three years ago because of proposed work on Edinburgh's tram system, which was subsequently cancelled.

"We felt it was important to preserve the memory of Thomas Hunter," said veteran Tom Forrest, who served in the Italian campaign and was one of those involved in setting up the original memorial.

"We had help from Eric Milligan, a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh who went to school with Hunter. He suggested Leith as a possible location."



● Maj Gen Ed Davis, Commandant General Royal Marines, delivers a eulogy to Thomas Peck Hunter VC at his memorial in Leith

A ceremony of rededication was held at the memorial, organised by the Royal Marines Association.

The parade to the monument, situated on Britannia Walk, was led by the Royal Marines Band Scotland, and included RMA veterans and serving Royal Marines of 43 Cdo Fleet Protection Group, senior Royal Marines officers, RM Reservists, and Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets.

Members of Hunter's family also attended, including his sister Nancy, who still lives in Edinburgh, and his nephew, Scottish Finance Minister John Swinney.

Veterans minister Keith Brown said: "Cpl Hunter's actions displayed incredible courage,

which rightly saw him awarded the Victoria Cross after his tragic death.

"It is a privilege to be at this event today which honours such bravery and sacrifice.

"Our Servicemen and women today continue to follow the example of people like Thomas Hunter."

Col Graham Dunlop (rtd), President of the RMA in Scotland said "For the Edinburgh branch the Thomas Hunter memorial is the most important one and they hold a parade in his honour each year.

"Now that the memorial has been replaced and in a more suitable location, I feel that's something we can build upon."

Winds of change in Warfare branch

AS PART of a reorganisation of the personnel area, all career management (CM) has been grouped under the new DACOS Career Manager, Capt King, and all branch management (BM) under DACOS BM, Capt Porter.

You should not notice any change to CM practices, other than the new emails shown in the table below.

The Aircraft Handlers CM is now centralised in West Battery and a new Intelligence Management Cell has been established to manage CTs, WS(EW)s and IAs.

Contacting 'Drafty'

Following a reduction in the number of CMs, individuals are to consider whether their question is correctly targeted.

Is the divisional chain or Unit HR more appropriate, or is the answer in BR3?

Overall manning

The size of each branch is governed by its 'liability'; the number of funded billets for each main trade and rank, with an allowance for Medical and Training Margin (margin).

The 'Strength' is the actual number of personnel, and any shortfalls which set the numbers of promotions, EC and EoS available.

The main causes of gapping are shortfalls in Strength, the number of personnel in non-liable billets, and more personnel in the margin than are allowed for (medical downgrades, courses etc).

The availability of suitably qualified, experienced personnel (SQEP), minimum time ashore (MTA), voluntary outflow (VO) further limit options and can lead to churn. Policies to reduce churn are being put in place, but will take time to have effect.

Resettlement

Personnel completing their engagement should be assigned to shore service for at least their last five months to one year, depending on engagement type.

With the high numbers of personnel due to leave in the next two to three years, organisations cannot avoid having personnel in resettlement phase.

CMs are only obliged to assign reliefs from the start of Terminal Leave.

Annual Leave Allowance (ALA) and Graduated Resettlement Time (GRT), which can be up to 35 working days, is the responsibility

of the employer and individual to manage; GRT can be taken any time within the last two years of service (or on submission of VO) or on achieving 30 years of service.

Early Termination

The standard notice period is 12 months. Reliefs will be assigned to meet the start of terminal leave.

If a person wishes to leave early, the employing organisation must be prepared to take a soft gap and make a positive statement, in writing, to the CM to that effect.

SJAR Common problems

EC – a high proportion of SJARs presented to the EC boards this year did not have the EC recommendation box completed.

In many cases a recommendation was given in the text but not particularly why the person should be retained.

A large number have no career aspirations or have not been set any objectives for the year.

Reporting Officers should comment on future potential and capacity for the next higher rate rather than just repeat the performance narrative. Comments relating to an individual's aspirations are also useful.

Discrepancies between a 'yes' for one rank up, and the narrative indicating 'developing' (ready next time) leave the Board in doubt as to whether the individual is actually being recommended.

Augmentation

The need for augmentation continues, and by its nature is meant to cause a soft gap in the donor organisation for the entire period, including PJTs and POTL.

NMT Qualifications

Be aware of new regulations regarding the pre-requisites for attending NMT courses and contact the local SPF manager. The window for conversion of legacy qualifications closes in March 2014.

Aircrewman Training

Both Anti-Submarine Warfare and Commando are recruiting for suitable candidates; BR 3 states the pre-grading and sideways entry criteria for these branches. Both cadres are undergoing aircraft transitions to either an updated aircraft or, in the case of the Commando Aircrewman, a new aircraft type.

These specialisations offer a high potential for future promotion at all levels.

Future Availability Dates (FAD)

In accordance with BR3, Future

Drafty's corner



Availability Dates (FADs) are for guidance only and reflect the current state of manning levels.

FADs can be amended by the CM to reflect the needs of the Service.

This does not generate an Assignment Order but will reflect on Separated Service Planning Tool within each unit.

Branch Specific Issues:

WS(AWW) – LH and PO remain an Operational Pinch Point (OPP) and gapping in all areas is likely to remain in the short term.

There are also a high number of POs and CPOs close to retirement and all Senior Rates should expect sea assignments.

There is also a growing requirement for SRs and new promotees to cross-train in weapon systems to fill sea assignments.

WS(AWT) – LH and POs are an OPP. Owing to temporary shortages of SQEP SRs, the balance between maintaining the number of instructors to ensure delivery of training and fully manning front line units may result in some gapping.

CIS – SR manning is in a fragile state, particularly at the PO level and with the introduction of DII (afloat). Current incumbents on sea-going units may be required to remain in post longer whilst the nominated relief completes all Pre-Joining Training for them to be fully SQEP.

SEA – Is in a fragile state owing to the requirement to be SQEP in both Tactical Command Support (TCS) and seamanship to maximise flexibility in employment and promotion.

For SRs it is vital that SJARs comment on TCS and Seamanship skill and experience levels.

Aircraft Handler (AH) and Phot – JR and SR CM is now centralised in West Battery.

Long Lead Specialist Skills programme is in place with second batch of AH currently under training in the USA. Any LH or PO interested should contact their CM.

Divers – Although currently at OPP, the PO and LS plots are approaching balance, constrained only by the length of the training pipeline.

The intention is to introduce Emergency Relief Pools for PO and LS; details will be promulgated separately.

MW – The PO plot is still currently at OPP, but is approaching balance, constrained only by the length of the training pipeline, so will take another 12-18 months to take full effect.

The strength in depth of promotion candidates at all levels is gratifying, and good for the future of the branch.

Efforts continue to reduce the additional NMT training burden.

Units should ensure that legacy qualifications are converted prior to March 2014 to help shorten the training pipeline.

PT and RNP – The requirement to have completed 12 months sea service prior to selection for promotion has been removed for both branches.

However, sea service needs to be completed prior to common promotion date; ratings selected for promotion who have not achieved 12 months sea service will be assigned to a sea billet on a priority basis.

SM (all specs) – SR manning is in a delicate state, and individuals may have their FADs extended whilst extended PJT packages are completed.

Recruitment to Coxn(SM), from all submarine branches, is a high priority.

WS(UW) – Remains an OPP, but is approaching balance at SR level. However, pull-through from AB to LS remains a critical area.

A balancing of non-S2087 T23 liability (1 CPO/1 PO) and T45 (Two PO) to three each of CPO/PO and three PO/PO is under way.

General Points

JPA – Ensure that JPA reflects your true and realistic preferences.

CMs make decisions balancing needs of the Service with your professional and personal aspirations and preferences as recorded in JPA. Your area preferences should reflect a realistic choice of options that exist for your rank/main trade.

Assignment cycle – Be aware of your likely sea/shore rotation – it should not come as a surprise if your SAV date is due and you get assigned back to sea.

The default value is 36 months sea/18 months shore, but this will vary by main trade and rate. If in doubt, check with your CM and manage your own and your family's expectations accordingly.

Where to look

Galaxy 13 – Op Herrick rotations 19 and 20 - Extended tours

DIBS

DIB 28/13 – Skills and Talent Management in Defence

DIB 30/13 – Enhanced Operating Model for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation

DIB 32/13 – Op Herrick Troop rotation arrangements

RNTMs

RNTM 099/13 – Microsoft Online - Training course and Home use programme

RNTM 106/13 – Divisional Training in the RN

RNTM 107/13 – Naval Servicewomen's Network inaugural conference, June 11 2013

RNTM 108/13 – Valedictory

Cake and chips

THE Navy's second most senior officer formally opened a one-stop shop which caters for the Fleet's computing and technology needs.

The Maritime C4ISR Support Unit (MCSU) provides round-the-clock support for all Naval units in providing, delivering and supporting IT and Information Systems equipment and reference data from the cradle to the grave.

The unit, based in a refurbished Maritime Warfare Centre building on Portsdown Hill, merges various technology departments and units across the Senior Service: the Fleet Information Management Unit, Fleet CIS Support Unit, the N6 ISS procurement team at Navy Command, the Command Radio Pool and RFA Electronic Support Group.

The idea of bringing them under one roof was born seven years ago and the officer involved in those initial stages is now in charge – Cdr David Moody.

It fell to his wife, Dawn, and the youngest member of the unit, LET Scott Wood, to cut the commissioning cake to celebrate the official opening (pictured).

As for the formal opening, it was performed by Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Philip Jones, who was given a tour of the facilities.



Picture: LA(PHOT) Jay Allen

Admiral Jones also presented three Herbert Lott awards to unit members for their outstanding work in developing new engineering solutions for communications systems which have saved the RN millions of pounds and improved communication information systems across the Fleet.

Hospital support

HAVING a family member in hospital is a difficult time for any family. Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) provides practical and emotional support at a challenging time.

DMWS is a small military charity that has been providing specialist welfare support to the military community for the past 70 years.

Originally known as the Service Hospitals Welfare Department (SHWD), it changed its name to DMWS when it became an independent charity in 2001.

Their team of welfare officers provide 24/7 support to injured Armed Forces personnel and their families when they're in hospital, rehabilitation or recovery centres.

During times of crisis you can depend on them to be impartial and confidential.

They also deploy operationally and have welfare officers based in the Field Hospital at Camp Bastion Afghanistan.

DMWS's Welfare Officers can help with:

1 Daily ward visits when you're in hospital;

- 2 Liaising with Service Ships, Unit Welfare Staff & Medical Staff;
- 3 Help with accommodation for families visiting wounded, injured or sick patients;
- 4 Provision of Welfare Flats;
- 5 Organising transport;
- 6 Accompanying families to critical care units;
- 7 Assistance and support in the event of death or bereavement;
- 8 Support of terminally-ill patients and their families;
- 9 Referrals and signposting to other agencies.

One mother said: "When our son was critically injured by an IED I felt sick to the pit of my stomach, not knowing if my son would survive the journey back."

"During the month he was in hospital the DMWS Welfare Officers made sure he had everything he required – nothing was too much trouble."

"The Welfare Officers will be remembered by all the families they have helped, going that extra mile every day of the week, far beyond the call of duty."

To find out more about DMWS, see www.dmws.org.uk

BFPO gets appy

HAVE you ever wondered where your letter or parcel was?

BFPO's Track and Trace smartphone app could provide the answer.

By entering a product's barcode into the app, it will display the route that the item will take, its location, and show the expected delivery times at each point on the route.

The Track and Trace App complements the BFPO Information App that allows customers to access up to date information on the products and services from the BFPO.

This app contains a handy postage calculator, advice on permitted items, lists posting deadlines for key dates, and allows you to create a label and barcode that can be used to track items posted from within the UK using the BFPO Track and Trace App.

BFPO is also refreshing its e-blue app. The current app provides a convenient way of sending e-blueys, in particular picture messages, without having to access a PC, and uses your phone's speech-to-text facility.

The BFPO smartphone apps are compatible with IOS and Android devices.

The new Track and Trace App will be released on June 5 and will be available for download in the appropriate app store.

For full details visit: www.gov.uk/british-forces-post-office-services

Get in touch

NEED to get your message across?

To feature in the *Navy News* Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer:

1 Lt Cdr Emma McCormick, 93832 8809, email

(Dii)
NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk
(External)
NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

Old title	Rank/Name	CM for	Extn	New email title
RCM SO1X	Cdr Richard Morris	WO1 - Common Appointments (CAPPs)	8868	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR SO1
RCM SO2 AW	Lt Cdr Sam Hutton	WO1 - AWW, AWT, CIS, SEA, PTI	8875	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR AWSO2
RCM SO2 UW	Lt Cdr Rick Watson	WO1 - SSM, TSM, CISSM, COXN(SM), Divers, WS(UW), MW	8892	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR UWSO2
OCM SO2 INT	Lt Cdr Katharine Rackham	WO1 - CT, WS(EW)	8976	NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR INTSO2
RCM WO1AIR	WO1 Paul Lofthouse	WO1 - NA(AH), NA(AC), NA(PHOT), ACMN, RMAC, MET, SR, RNP	8874	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR AIRWO1
RCM INT	WO1 Graeme Leslie	WO2-AB - CT CPO/PO - EW	8824	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR INT1
RCM INT	WO2 Tracy Roche	WO2-AB - CT CPO/PO - EW	8852	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR INT2
RCM Office Manager- CIS/SEA/PTI	CPO Russ Feltham	CPO-PO - CIS, SEA CPO-LH - PTI	8882	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR CISSEA
RCM AWW/AWT	PO Kelley Jenkins	CPO-PO - AWW, AWT	8873	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR AWWAWT
RCM D/MW	PO Natalie Hodgkins	CPO-PO - MW CPO-AB - Divers	8879	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR DMW
RCM SM/UW	PO Nick Nicholson	CPO-PO - SM, TSM, SSM, CISSM, COXSM, UW	8941	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR SMUW
RCM JRAH	PO Rob McDonald	CPO-NA - NA(AH), CPO-LH - PHOT,	8841	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR JRAH
RCM AIR/PT	PO Leanne Ainscough	CPO-LH ACMN/NA(AC) CSGT-CPL - RMAC CPO-LH - RNP	8878	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR AIR
RCM ADMIN	Miss Lorraine Conway	RCM ADMIN	8893	NAVY PERS-CM OR WAR ADMIN2

Phone No (external): 02392 62 (extn)/mil 93832 (extn)

Airing big issues with the Boss

KEEN to know what frontline troops are thinking, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Sir David Richards set up meetings with his single Service Command WOs to hear it from the horse's mouth, and get a discussion going.

And, being the breed of people that they are, the WOs were only too keen to oblige, providing feedback to the troops on the views from the top.

The General said: "I value these meetings greatly. They are a unique opportunity to get the raw detail on the current issues which are causing our people most angst in the here-and-now and how we are dealing with issues discussed at our previous meetings. For me it is clear – people matter most."

The chance to speak to the very top matters a lot to the WOs.

As WO1 Corps RSM Alistair McGill RM said: "It matters because there is an element at the top end of the chain of command that wants to hear the coal-face opinions and trends from across the Service."

"And the important thing in the four of us coming together is the fact that we all have the same issues – there is a commonality about the things that concern us."

Yet, however valuable they find it, they only have an hour of CDS's precious time. So it mustn't be squandered.

"We don't go into individual issues – we are looking for the themes of what soldiers, sailors and airmen and women are feeling," said the Chief of the Air Staff's WO, Graeme Spark.

"Things that, with the best will in the world, commissioned officers are not always going to be able to tap into."

So what are these big-ticket items? Some are not surprising – the swelling of numbers of reserves, the Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme, the possible implications

of the next SDSR for example.

Others may seem small at first glance, but can go to the heart of the Armed Forces experience, impacting on morale, and even recruitment and retention. And not all issues impact on each Service at the same time or in the same way.

Reductions in manpower through redundancies over recent years have been dealt with differently by each Service, and being able to share these experiences helps to take some of the heat out of the situation.

"The RAF and the Navy started going through this before us," said WO1 Burrows.

"I remember asking last year about how it had affected morale. "It was really useful to hear what was done about it before we began to face the situation."

WO1 (RN) Terry Casey said: "Two and a half years ago when we'd just come out from the SDSR, when I was going round, the questions were all, 'Sir, will I have a job next year? Sir, next year will I have a pension? Sir, will I ever have a pay rise again?'"

"Now those issues haven't gone away, but we've gone through the process and dealt with the tough decisions, they have gone off the boil. The issues we face are much more internal now."

One of those issues is the requirement to increase the numbers of reservists being recruited. Again, it affects each Service, but in a different way, and the discussions with CDS reflect that.

For the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines the issues are mostly about asking if reservists are being used in the most effective way.

For the Army, it is more about numbers and training, and integration into the regular structure.

A related issue that is very much on everyone's mind, and an item discussed at the meeting



● General Sir David Richards discusses pressing issues with Command Warrant Officers, left to right WO Graeme Spark, WO1 Burrows, WO1 Terry Casey and WO1 Alastair McGill

with CDS, was post gapping, both military and civilian. "Gapping affects a lot of people. We talked about the effect it's having on morale and on health due to stress in the workplace," said WO1 Burrows.

Another agenda item was the level of services being provided by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Again, the theme may be general, but with Service specific variations.

For the Navy, the issue is training establishments being developed to reflect a modern Navy. The WOs want to know who is holding DIO to account.

Thanks to the Warrant Officers meeting, an action plan has emerged which CDS will be taking forward with DIO Chief, Andrew Manley.

The forum is useful for returning to problems and asking: 'Have we done enough on this?' But the WOs are always keen to canvas CDS on his views of the future.

As the Forces are nearing the end of campaigns after more than a decade in Iraq and Afghanistan, what is in store for the military?

WO1 McGill steps up to the plate. "For a whole cohort in the military, the corporals and the SNCOs, they may have known nothing else, and we have to get

back to contingent operations and prepare for that within each of our fighting arms. It's also very important for our lads, and future recruits, to have a challenge. That's why people join up, and if they don't get that, they are bright people and they have the capability to earn money outside."

WO1 Burrows takes up the theme: "We can all remember the days before Afghanistan and Iraq, in the '90s. You'd get up, go for a run, go to the ranges. You knew

you had a tour of Ireland on the horizon and maybe a couple of exercises a year."

The WOs nod: "None of us join up to get rich, but we did join for a reason," said WO Spark. "A bit of it was serving your country, some of its about self-development, and having a long and enjoyable career. We need to provide that scope for the future."

And what was CDS's view? "He agreed," said WO1 Burrows, "as do all the Service chiefs. He

When tragedy strikes

BEING married to someone in the Armed Forces very quickly becomes a large part of the civilian partner's own life.

When tragedy strikes and bereavement occurs, loss of the regular link to the Services can be felt keenly by the widow or widower left behind.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Widows' Association (RNRMWA) provides friendship and support to those in need.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) supported the RNRMWA by making a grant to help publish a new booklet *A Bereaved Families Guide*.

RNRMWA chairwoman Lesley-Ann George-Taylor, said: "The guide will be one on which a spouse/partner, mother or father can rely as a safe source of information."

"All of us in the association have lost loved ones and woken at two in the morning, confused, with no one there and not knowing what to do next."

"There are lots of facts on the internet but we wanted to produce something that you can hold in your hand and turn to whenever you need advice from people who are in the same situation."

"We are determined that this guide will be a high-quality publication that can be used by

said we must provide training, including adventurous training, and opportunities to keep people excited."

There's always a lot to talk about in a short space of time. But at least the WOs know as they get back to burning more motorway miles meeting the troops that thanks to these meetings they are even better informed than they were before.

And they need to be. "I think that the young men and women that join up today are generally brighter individuals than they used to be," said WO1 McGill.

"Twenty or thirty years ago it wasn't the sort of environment where you could openly ask questions. You did as you were told."

"Today, quite rightly, they demand more. They have questions and they want to know the answers. This allows us to do that. Now we make sure they get good feedback. And this meeting means we can say: 'And this is from CDS'. It really doesn't get any better than that."

other charities and organisations such as the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund and Naval Personal and Family Service, as well as ourselves.

"As it costs more than we can afford, the RNRMC are very kindly paying for its production."

"We are grateful to the charity for the funding and support it gives to all the umbrella charities that help so many people."

The RNRMWA is run by a group of volunteers to support widows and widowers and recognised partners of Service personnel.

To find out more, see www.rnrmwidowsassociation.org or telephone 023 9265 4374.

A year of commitment to families

WE have just completed our annual analysis of NFF activity and it is packed with information for RN and RM families.

We thought that an edited version, prepared just for *Navy News*, would help keep readers up-to-date.

The full version will feature on our website and is in our summer issue of *Homeport*, which is out this month.



Busy Busy Busy

In the last 12 months our team of six undertook 478 visits and meetings, speaking to approximately 4,898 people, in addition to the regular faces.

Customer enquiries are increasing and our magazine subscriptions, website visits and social media followers are all on the up as we reach more people with the NFF message.

The RN and RM Families Survey (FAMCAS) is a key document used by the Service to measure the views of spouses and civil partners.

The 2012 report shows 81 per cent of the respondents who have used the NFF were either 'very or fairly satisfied' with our service.

This is an increase of 30 per cent from the previous year, indicating that we are getting it right for our families.

NFF News

It is an exciting time for the NFF Team; we are honoured to have been awarded the Chief of Naval Personnel and Training and Second Sea Lords' Commendation; have been granted additional funding; and reached the significant milestone of being in business for ten years; all to celebrate.

HICs to HASCs

In April 2012, the eight Housing Information Centres (HICs) were amalgamated into two Housing Allocation Service Centres (HASCs). For many families this was a frustrating time.

Throughout the process NFF engaged with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), the Chain of Command and the Minister for Defence, Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, making them aware of the impact on families.

On the upside, the introduction of the localised Customer Assistance Points (CAPS) for SFA residents, and the self-preference system for applications are welcomed; the electronic application system seems to have bedded in well.

Listening to you:

Reactive Evidence

Families and personnel approach us with concerns that are affecting their daily life. Every enquiry is responded to and recorded in our customer database.

We produce reports from the database that provide a clear indication of concerns. These

reports are presented to policy makers to help inform their decisions.

Families and personnel also set the agenda at Families Days and briefings; we are open to discuss and assist with whatever concern is on their mind. The statistics are contained within the full report.

Proactive Evidence

We embark upon proactive evidence gathering to ensure that we have the opinions of as many families as possible.

We pose questions on major announcements and gather evidence for key meetings.

We pick up on emerging trends from our customer database and ask pertinent, timely questions to be ahead of the game.

Website Poll

In addition to the *Homeport* poll and our ongoing NFF Family Feedback Survey, we ran six website polls over the year. We are conscious that families are asked for their opinion from many angles, so we pick and choose when to pose a question to add value.

We ran polls on the following topics, passing feedback onto the relevant areas:

- The Armed Forces Pay Award 2013;
- House of Commons Defence Select Committee Inquiry: Educating the children of Service personnel;
- What is the Armed Forces Covenant?
- Contacting the HASC: Your feedback wanted.
- Why does the Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FAMCAS) have a low response rate?
- New self-preference system for

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION



SFA applications: Your feedback wanted.

Who, What, Where?

Below is a summary of the key meetings and activities in which we have been involved this year:

Access to Key Military Personnel

Our regular direct access to Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel and Commandant General Royal Marines and Commander Amphibious Forces Major General Ed Davis continues.

This privileged access is used wisely; We ensure that the primary messages from families are heard at the top level, undiluted and as is.

Admiral Steel has instigated monthly meetings with the NFF which is great news. Chair NFF also accompanies Second Sea Lord at his regular CO-Desig 'fireside chats'.

Navy Board

Chair NFF spoke to the Navy Board as part of the Federation's annual programme of commitments on behalf of families. The floor is open for the NFF to bring forward the issues it deems relevant for discussion with top military personnel.

Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB)

The AFPRB provides independent advice to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on pay, allowances, and charges for members of the Armed Forces.

Each October the Families Federations provide formal evidence on the motivation factors and morale of families. An extract from the AFPRB's 2013 report: "The Service Families' Federations told us in their

oral evidence session that the cumulative pressures on the military were mounting. Many personnel they had spoken to felt overstretched and believed that their original terms and conditions of service had been eroded."

Families Forum

The Families Federations met with the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, The Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, at the Families Forum – he was very engaged. This meeting is important to families.

It is about making the MOD aware of the impact their policies and decisions are having on families. It is important to have this access and to make it count.

Covenant Reference Group/Ministerial Sub Committee

The Prime Minister and nine MPs, who represented key government departments, attended this meeting at 10 Downing Street.

Everyone was keen to know how the Armed Forces Covenant was delivering and what more could be done to redress any disadvantages that the Armed Forces community faces in comparison to the civilian population.

The Minister for Government Policy said he was open to suggestions at any time, and the Prime Minister wanted to know what more could be done.

NFF highlighted the need to raise awareness amongst local authorities about what makes a serving person and their family tick; not all understand the unique challenges of Service life.

House of Commons Defence Select Committee

The NFF contributed evidence to the committee's enquiry into

education. It was challenging to represent all families; education is a personal and emotive issue with many varied viewpoints.

Central Advisory Committee for Pensions and Compensation

NFF raised a query regarding the future role of the Independent Medical Experts Group. They advise on medical aspects of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme; we sought reassurance that the group would be formalised and in place for the future – it has been formalised.

Welsh Assembled Armed Forces Expert Group

The issues discussed included health, housing and education.

In October, the NFF went back to Wales to discuss how the region is embracing the Armed Forces Covenant and how it is delivering care to veterans with mental health issues.

Enhancing Personal, Family and Community Support Services

Over the next year the RN will be implementing changes in how it supports personnel, families and the wider Naval Service community which will improve the quality, consistency, and accessibility of the support available.

NFF is involved in the review and will contribute to its implementation.

The points raised at these meetings are based on the issues and concerns that families bring to us for resolution and guidance, and the results of our evidence gathering. If you think there are other matters that need to be acknowledged, please get in touch.

Contact the NFF: Tel: 023 9265 4374, email: admin@nff.org.uk Write to us at: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell



Farewell voyage

NAVAL Reservists at HMS King Alfred lined the route to the Whale Island quay and cheered their outgoing Commanding Officer, Cdr Kevin Robertson, as he departed by motor launch (pictured above) following a formal handover to his successor Cdr Anthony Stickland.

The ship's company arranged an honour guard salute for Cdr Robertson on his last working evening, following three years in command.

As one of the few full-time RN officers since World War 2 to lead an RNR unit, Cdr Robertson's special farewell evening also marked his final day of work in the Naval Service.

A dinner and gift presentations marked the end of his 35-year career as a warfare officer. Cdr Robertson is retiring to seek new challenges in the civilian world.

He worked closely with Naval Command HQ to define the future Maritime Reserve requirement across all of the specialist reservist branches that will support and integrate with the future Navy Force under the FR 2020 programme.

This project was undertaken whilst also overseeing the careers and training of King Alfred's 200 Reservists as well as managing his small team of full-time

administrative staff.

At his last evening muster, Cdr Robertson reflected on his time serving alongside the RNR and said: "I have the utmost respect for the commitment, determination and professionalism of all the Reservists based at King Alfred, and to have the chance to command them over the past three years has been professionally rewarding and a highlight of my career in the RN."

"As a one-off event, I would have to say the Freedom Parade in Portsmouth was certainly the highlight of my command but the most satisfaction has been in seeing so many King Alfred Reservists complete successful mobilisations in support of operations, not just in Afghanistan but also across a wide range of activities at home and abroad."

King Alfred's new CO, Cdr Stickland, said: "It's a great honour to be assuming command of KA at such an exciting time for the Maritime Reserves."

"We are a key element in the government's defence strategy, and KA is destined for growth."

"Next year we are marking KA's 20th year since commissioning, and also making our contribution towards Portsmouth's celebrations of the 70th anniversary of D-Day and the Liberation of Europe."



● Cdre Andrew Jameson signs the Victory Book following handover of command from Cdre Gareth Derrick

Legal eagle to lead Reserves

COMMODORE Andrew Jameson has assumed command of the Maritime Reserves from his predecessor Cdre Gareth Derrick.

The handover ceremony took place onboard the First Sea Lord's flagship, HMS Victory, in the presence of Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel, families and the guests of the two commodores.

Cdre Jameson inspected the Guard, formed of members of RNR units from across the country, and then joined the Second Sea Lord for his address to assembled guests in Nelson's Great Cabin.

Cdre Jameson and Cdre Derrick marked the official handover of command by signing the Victory Book.

Of his new appointment, Cdre Jameson said: "It is a great honour to assume command of the Maritime Reserves."

"The government has set out an exciting future for the reserve forces of all three Services."

"For the Maritime Reserves, this sees an expansion in numbers and an increase in roles."

"I am looking forward to leading our men and women as we strive to meet that challenge, and

support the maritime contribution to defence."

Cdre Jameson has had a wide-ranging career in the RN, serving as a Supply Officer in both surface vessels and submarines and qualifying as a Naval barrister.

He was called to the Bar in 1994 and subsequently appointed as the legal adviser to Flag Officer Surface Flotilla.

A former Head of the Naval Prosecuting Authority, he has also served as the Logistics Commander of HMS Ark Royal.

Cdre Jameson was on the Armed Forces Bill Team and was the military lead for tri-Service discipline policy.

This period saw the implementation of the Armed Forces Act 2006, and work for the 2011 legislation.

Cdre Jameson became the Commodore Naval Legal Services for three years prior to being selected for Command of the Maritime Reserve Forces.

The Maritime Reserves comprises both the RNR and Royal Marines Reserve.



● Cdr Jane Allen RD RNR
Picture: LA(Phot) Jenny Lodge

Bound for Kabul

A long-serving Naval Reservist is off to Kabul in Afghanistan for six months to be the media adviser to the senior British general and second in command to the coalition forces.

Cdr Jane Allen, who has 33 years' service in the RNR and is attached to HMS Vivid, expects that it will be her last deployment overseas. In 2006 she performed a similar role in Baghdad, on the staff of the Commander of all British forces in Iraq.

Working at a strategic level with senior Iraqi political, military and civilian organisations, she liaised with the UK Embassy and military organisations in southern Iraq.

"For my rank in the RNR, where mobilisation jobs are quite rare, it's unusual to be deployed like this, so I see it as quite a privilege," she said.

"I've proved I'm fit enough to go and I've done all the training, so I'm really chuffed. It's why I joined the Reserves."

Cdr Allen has held a number of Maritime Reserves HQ posts in recruitment, employer support, and spent three years as equerry to the Honorary Rear Admiral of the Maritime Reserves, Prince Michael of Kent.

In the late '80s Cdr Allen was tasked to manage the implementation of the first computerised personnel database for all RNR units, which prompted a civilian career change into IT project management.

She has worked for both Devon and Cornwall Police and the Courts Service as an IT project manager.

Cdr Allen returned to the RNR two years ago to close the database she set up and move all data across to a new computer system integrating the RNR into the Navy's JPA IT system.

Cdr Allen and her former RM officer husband Frank were independently selected to be Olympic torchbearers for the 2012 Games; Cdr Allen for her long service and commitment and Frank for his community work. They were the only couple to pass the flame between them.

REX CADMAN PRESENTS

THE WAR AND PEACE REVIVAL

THE GREATEST GATHERING OF MILITARY VEHICLES ON THE PLANET

AT RAF WESTENHANGER IN HELLFIRE CORNER

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE INVICTA MILITARY VEHICLE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Now celebrating its 31st year, War and Peace moves this year to RAF Westenhanger, Folkestone Racecourse from its old home at The Hop Farm in Kent. On from 17-21 July 2013, the exciting new show will feature military and civilian re-enactors, living history, battle re-enactments and arena events, veterans, military vehicles, vintage entertainment, shopping, funfair and models - it's a great family day out! Come and buy your finds in hundreds of trade stands where you can find anything from a button to a tank in the militaria stalls or browse the Vintage market place for your vintage/retro clothing, homewares and memorabilia! Wander the Vintage Village with its civilian displays from the 1930s - 1960s including Home Front, classic cars and support vehicles and much more - something for everyone whether you're into the military side or just the vintage living. Live music day and night gives a real festival feel to the world's biggest military vehicle event.

See hundreds of WW2 veterans and listen to their incredible tales or join us commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the Korean war and the 50th anniversary of the end of National Service.

Entertainment in the V Marquee will feature singers, entertainers, big bands, dancers and the beautiful burlesque performers. Take part in dance lessons then try out your moves in the evening in the vintage clothes you find in the trade stalls - not sure where to start? Then take inspiration at our fashion events. Public camping is available for those who want to join in the exclusive evening entertainment!

The new showground is just a couple of minutes off J11 of the M20 with ample parking. Mainline Westenhanger station is immediately next door - and the High Speed train will be stopping during the weekend, just for the show! For those travelling from the continent, the Channel Tunnel terminus is 5 minutes away and Dover ferry port about a 20-minute drive.

Veteran, current serving military and group booking rates available - call 01304 813337 for more details or to book or see www.thewarandpeace revival.co.uk.

THREE FAMILY TICKETS TO BE WON!

Enter our competition and you could be one of three lucky winners of a Family Ticket to this event. Simply answer the question below, complete the entry form and post to:

War and Peace Revival Competition,
Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH
or email your answer to bm@navynews.co.uk

CLOSING DATE 5 JULY 2013

Entries must reach the Navy News office by 12 noon 5 July 2013. Three entries will be drawn at 15.00. Each lucky winner will be notified by mail, phone or post and will receive a Family ticket. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not permitted to enter the competition.

Question: What year is the War and Peace Revival celebrating this year?

Answer:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Email:



Airman's African adventure

DEEP in the copperbelt region of North West Zambia, in the footsteps of Christian missionary explorer Dr David Livingstone is a Naval Reserve doing good things.

CPO Steve Houghton, an air engineer at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, spent three weeks with the charity Tearfund, a Christian-based Non-Government Organisation (NGO), working with children and young adults in rural schools in Zambia.

By day in the UK, Steve works at 824 NAS as a civil servant, but in his spare time is a Royal Naval Reservist in the Air Branch, serving with 771 Search and Rescue Squadron, where he teaches engineering to new joiners.

"Some of the children were desperately poor, and although they had very little they were enthusiastic and keen to learn," said Steve.

"My background is in physics and aeronautical engineering from my career in the RN, so I decided to teach the children how to make paper planes and helicopters."

"The children needed to fold the paper along the straight edge, communicate and follow instructions precisely, I marked each one for neatness and accuracy, teaching them the



● CPO Houghton encourages Zambian youngsters in a rural school

importance of being exact in their work and gaining a sense of achievement."

Steve is no stranger to Africa and has also worked on projects in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda as well as Thailand in Asia.

But his latest adventure has brought him into contact with some of the social and health issues which affect the region.

Zambia has some of the highest levels of HIV in Africa; families

are torn apart by poverty and orphaned by disease.

Many schools are run by local communities and receive little government money.

Steve continued: "Attracting the children to learn and encouraging them to make career choices is important in this part of Africa."

"They don't necessarily need another doctor or politician, but an engineer who can bring water and electricity to their village is more important."



Picture: Lt Cdr Tony Scott RNR

● The new Acting Sub Lieutenants celebrate passing their Initial Naval Training at BRNC Dartmouth in traditional style

Great Expectations

THE Royal Naval Reserve is preparing new junior officers for the challenges of command, leadership and management with the introduction of a rigorous new initial training course.

The training sees Reserve Officers ultimately matching the standards of expectation required of their regular Service counterparts, with other training undertaken in their spare time while simultaneously managing their civilian careers.

The course now runs three times a year at BRNC Dartmouth. This year, over a chilly 16-day period in February and March, nine officer cadets from RNR units across the country successfully completed the new course and have now passed onto the next stage of their officer training.

Lt Cdr Graeme Deighton RNR is overseeing the changes to the RNR Junior Officer training programme.

Graeme works as the Resource Development Manager at the British Standards Institute when he is not conducting his reserve duties.

"This is certainly not a course for the faint hearted, but I'm pleased to say that all of this intake's cadets passed," he said.

"This only highlights the high fitness levels and preparations of these officer cadets in the months before they arrived at Dartmouth."

The RNR junior officer training covers everything from sea sense and maritime skills on the River



● OC Chris Houlston on the River Dart.

Picture: Lt Cdr Graeme Deighton RNR

Dart through to combat skills, fieldcraft and land navigation training by RM instructors.

A/Sub Lt Debbie Willis, from HMS President, said: "We all went into this course with a great deal of trepidation.

"Our team agreed that we wanted to pass not just as individuals but, more importantly, as a team. And that's just what we did."

A successful pass at the Fleet Board allows the newly-commissioned sub lieutenants to start their branch training.

With regular RN officers taking 30 weeks to reach Fleet Board, the average duration for Reservists to achieve the same standard is two years – a mixture of in-unit, weekend and personal training, in addition to their Dartmouth course and a period at sea in a warship.

WITH land and maritime forces from Dragonia and Pastonia facing off in the Wallian Archipelago (commonly known as the British Isles), a heavily-armed NATO multinational force is on the way to ease tensions in the region. The nations seem on the brink of war.

Step in the Royal Naval Reserves to save the day... well, not quite, but without the volunteers, NATO's premier joint military exercise off the coast of Scotland would not be possible.

From the faraway island town of Stornoway to the bustling Ops Room in Clyde Naval Base, 55 Reservists from all over the UK provided the much-needed support to this massive combined and joint exercise.

Indeed, without the Reserves, more than 30 ships, 65 aircraft and over 10,000 personnel involved would not have been able to count on stores when they needed replacement parts.

Nor would they have transport around the north of Scotland when people needed to be relocated, and who would deliver an up-to-date Twitter feed or manage news items to help move the exercise scenario along?

With so many personnel and assets involved in this year's Exercise Joint Warrior (JW), the Northwood-based Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff (JTEPS) relied heavily on volunteers to fill the gaps.

Lt Rob Thurmott, a Media Operations Specialist from HMS President in London, joined the RNR last December.

The former RN warfare officer now works as a procurement manager for New Century,



● German frigate FGS Hessen and Auxiliary Ship FGS Frankfurt at Main participated in Joint Warrior 13

providing police and military skills mentoring programmes.

He spent two weeks as the deputy director of the Dragonian Media Operations Centre, helping the Dragonian Navy win the battle for hearts and minds in Dragonia and abroad.

"Joint Warrior is a fantastic opportunity to train in a multinational environment. The pace of the exercise coupled with the unpredictability of the scenario ensured a high sense of realism throughout," said Lt Thurmott.

Capt Martin Quinn, the RNR's force generation lead, visited Reservists taking part in the exercise.

"Reservists go to Joint Warrior for one of two reasons," said Capt Quinn.

"Either they are there providing professional support at the Operational Performance Standard (OPS) – so effectively doing the job they are trained to do, side by side with their regular colleagues.

"Alternatively, a small number of them are there to validate

themselves at the end of their training, to demonstrate to their branch managers that they have reached OPS, which is exactly what Joint Warrior does for the ships taking part, in that it proves that they are ready to deploy on operations."

It is clear that the exercise directing staff, led by Capt Phil Titterton, value the contribution



● MTO branch specialist Lt Cdr Laurence Clark in Faslane supporting Joint Warrior, monitoring merchant vessels during the live maritime exercise.

made by the Maritime Reservists.

Capt Titterton, who hands over the reins at JTEPS later this year, said: "Joint Warrior is a wonderful opportunity for Reserves to build upon their core skills and a cost-effective way for all three Services to bring their Reservists up to OPS."

In such a high-value exercise, there is very real pressure on members of the Maritime Reserves to perform to the highest standards.

However, if this year's exercise is used as a benchmark, Reservists could now look upon Joint Warrior as a professional target, a milestone in their naval career, and use it to prove to themselves and their regular colleagues that they can fulfil their potential and make a real difference for the Royal Navy.

Under the Future Reserves Programme FR20 there will be a 50 per cent increase in Reservists with even more roles and opportunities as they continue to be an integral element of the Naval Service.

Dedicated Dalriada

THE Royal Naval Reserves' return to Glasgow from Greenock after an absence of 20 years has been celebrated at a rededication ceremony for HMS Dalriada.

The RNR unit recently relocated to the city following a £1m investment to provide training facilities and support the 75 Naval Reservists who live and work in the West of Scotland.

Lord Astor, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, unveiled a commemorative plaque and spoke to assembled guests of the importance of the Armed Forces Reserves.

Lord Astor thanked all the Reservists for their commitment.

"I am delighted to take part in the re-dedication of HMS Dalriada, following the move here to Govan," he said.

"The UK is safer because of

the contributions of units like Glasgow's Royal Naval Reserve, working as part of an integrated UK Armed Forces.

"The expertise that Reservists bring from the civilian world, in fields like logistics and administration, benefit the whole of the Royal Navy.

"Reservists have made an essential contribution to our national security and will continue to do so in the future."

Lord Astor also acknowledged that achieving full integration between regular RN and Reserves would be challenging but he reaffirmed the government's commitment to deliver the Future Force 2020 programme:

"The government has committed £1.8bn of investment in the Reserve Forces over the next ten years and we are working hard to ensure employers understand



● Eyes right - HMS Dalriada's Guard at the re-dedication ceremony

the benefits of employing Reservists," he said.

"We want to ensure that our Reserves, their families and employers are properly supported as opportunities for mobilised service become more frequent.

"The forthcoming Reserves White Paper is underpinned by extensive consultation with employers, stakeholders and, crucially, the Reservists themselves.

"It will lay out in detail the MOD's plans for the future Reserves including a list of their potential tasks: homeland security, national resilience, support to short-term and long-term operations, defence engagement, capacity building and conflict

● Lord Astor, Under Secretary of State for Defence, speaks to LS(Logs) Paul Ellis at HMS Dalriada's rededication ceremony.



Pictures: PO(Phot) Jim Gibson, (RNR Air Branch)



● RNR ABs Reece Deighton (Calliope) and Nicola Triggs (President) work part of ship as HMS Monmouth goes alongside in Rhodes

Special sea duty

HMS MONMOUTH welcomed 18 RN Reservists as temporary members of her ship's company on her return to the UK.

The opportunities of such an invitation were not to be missed, and a diverse team of three YOs, two senior ratings and 13 JRs were selected from a list of eager volunteers from various RNR units across the UK.

Embarking in Cyprus, the Reservists, most of whom had little or no experience of serving on an operational warship, had to adapt quickly to life onboard.

They were fallen straight into the duty rosters and had to pull their weight throughout their two-week stay, doing the jobs they had been trained to do.

A structured programme of branch and whole-ship training was laid on to develop the Reserves' skills, prior to leaving the ship in Gibraltar.

"It has been great having the Reservists onboard for the past two weeks," said the ship's CO,

Cdr Gordon Ruddock.

"They have integrated quickly into my ship's company and have been eager to practise their trades as well as learn new skills and get first hand experience of how a front line ship operates.

"Without them onboard doing their jobs I would not have been able to send some of my people home early."

Ratings from the warfare, MTO, communications and logistics branches worked alongside their regular RN counterparts both at sea and alongside during shore stops.

PO Duane Heal, from HMS Flying Fox, said: "The opportunities for experience at sea in a front-line ship are very rare for Reservists, so with the help of all levels of the ship's company, we are making sure that our team is utilising every minute to gain experience and knowledge which will prove invaluable as they progress through their Reserve careers."



NOTICEBOARD

Deaths

Rear-Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles. Joined under the public schools cadetship scheme aged 18 and sailed in training cruiser Frobisher to the West Indies and the Baltic. Appointed to Australian destroyer Voyager before serving in HMS Cumberland, Suffolk and Cornwall on the China Station, returning home to join the Torpedo School at HMS Vernon. In HMS Arethusa during the evacuation of Norway in 1939 after which he took part in the attack on the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir, then sent to co-ordinate mine disposal work in the Suez Canal. Mentioned in despatches four times and in 1941 awarded the George Medal for "gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty" during bomb and mine disposal work while serving at HMS Nile, at Ras el-Tin Point, Alexandria, and later DSO for "courage, outstanding leadership and devotion to duty", notably during an attack on the Croatian island of Lussino. He had been recruited to run arms to Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia, co-ordinate commandos and MGBs which attacked the enemy at night as well as liaising with Tito's naval commander from Bari on the Italian coast, to the island of Vis. Appointed MBE in 1942 and OBE in 1943; as the war in Europe ended he was posted to the Far East. After a Joint Services staff course in 1947 he completed two years in Trieste as naval liaison officer at the British Army HQ in the disputed territory. 1950-51 he was commanding Chieftain in the First Destroyer Flotilla during the Persian oil crisis and appointed Captain of Naval Intelligence, Far East and then of the Dartmouth Training Squadron. His final seagoing command was cruiser Belfast, flagship of the Far East Fleet. Promoted rear-admiral he was appointed president of the RN College Greenwich. On retiring from the Service he became an MP; he was knighted in 1975. He played an important part in Operation Seahorse, which created a trust to save and run Belfast until she became part of the Imperial War Museum, May 4. Aged 98.

Lt Gen Sir Stuart Robert Pringle 10th Bt RM. Joined Royal Marines 1946, awarded Sword of Honour upon completion of training. Went to sea in HMS Mauritius, Mediterranean Fleet and in the early 1950s served in Hong Kong and Malaya during the Emergency before qualifying as a signals officer. During Suez he served in 3 Cdo Brigade, landing at Port Said and later served two tours of duty in Cyprus during the Eoka campaign. Returning to the Far East 1961 (the year in which he succeeded his father in the baronetcy) he saw service in Brunei after a revolt against the Sultan and in the Indonesian Confrontation. 1964 he won the Director's Prize for his year at the Royal Naval Staff College before being appointed to the Defence Planning Staff in Whitehall. Second-in-command of 40 Cdo in the Far East 1969-71, leading troops in assault ship Intrepid when she sailed from Singapore to bring aid to East Pakistan after disastrous floods. Commanded 45 Cdo, the specialist mountain and Arctic warfare unit 1971-74, including two tours of duty in Northern Ireland. Promoted to major-general 1978 as head of Cdo Forces, chief of staff to Commandant General RM 1979 then Commandant General RM 1981, he immediately faced crisis: following a defence review, the Defence Secretary wanted to run down the Navy's amphibious shipping. In October 1981, shortly after his promotion, he was blown up by an IRA bomb in his car and lost his right leg below the knee, however, by the end of March 1982 he recovered sufficiently to return to his post; days later Argentina invaded the Falklands. The Task Force that went to the South Atlantic included all his available marines. April 18. Aged 84.

Capt Mike Barrow DSO. Served in HMS Devonshire, Liverpool, Agincourt, Euryalus, Camperdown and Britannia before commanding Caution, Laleston, Mowhawk, Torquay, Domede and Glamorgan. Whilst on routine Fleet exercises in the Atlantic intelligence of the Argentine threat to the Falklands grew and preliminary plans to recapture the islands were drawn up; they were formulated by Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse and Capt Barrow, the most senior captain afloat. Britain's Task Force was formed, sailed south and on May 1 a total exclusion zone was declared around the islands. Glamorgan with frigates Arrow and Alacrity (the "Three Musketeers") bombarded Port Stanley airfield. Over the ensuing seven weeks, by day Glamorgan took on fuel,

ammunition and stores while screening the carriers; at dusk she went inshore to bombard targets. On June 12, while 45 Cdo assaulted Two Sisters Mountain, he decided to stay in support of the Royal Marines longer than ordered. As Glamorgan withdrew at first light she was hit by a shore-launched Exocet missile which killed 13 sailors and injured several others. After repairs she was ready for action, but the Argentines had surrendered and she was sent home. Awarded the DSO, he left the Navy 1983. He was a Gentleman Usher to the Queen (1984-2002) and appointed CVO 2002. April 28. Aged 80.

Lt Cdr Jim Barker. Joined 1948 as a Boy Seaman at Shotley, progressed through Boom Technician (BT) branch to PO and then commissioned SD Boatswain in 1963. Served various Bar Boats, Narvik, Protector, Owen, Layburn (Malta) and Laymoor (in command); also FOST as Staff Seamanship Officer and HMS Intrepid. CO of HMS Victory from 1979 until retirement in 1982. Member and secretary of RN Boatswains' Association until disbandment in 2000. March 10. Aged 81.

Lt Cdr Thomas 'Tom' Mullen. Served in most classes of ship from Ton-class minesweeper to battleship (HMS Vanguard); also served in HMS Eagle and Ark Royal. In the late 70s appointed to HMS Rooke (Gibraltar) as Base Gunnery Officer, then as Executive Officer. His final appointment in 1987 was OIC Navy Buildings and Cape Wrath range administration officer, which he continued after retiring in 1990 (Retired Officer's post). March 27. Aged 77.

Kenneth Frederick John Martin DSM. Served 1933-47 at HMS St Vincent training to be a Telegraphist, Morse Code Operator and Radio Technician, then in HMS Barham and Royal Sovfeign before joining Orion in which he spent four years. 1940 involved in the Battle of Matapan and the evacuation of Allied troops from Crete. 1941 returned to the UK to train in Combined Operations with the Commandos in Scotland and was deployed to Corsica to prepare for the invasion of Italy, initially to take the island of Elba from the Germans. Asked to select two Radio Operators as part of a landing party of five men but he chose to go himself as the chances of survival were practically nil. After two attempts to land him by small craft he scaled a cliff with his equipment and relayed information back to ships in the bay; for these actions he was awarded the DSM. Involved in the Anzio landings and was Douglas Fairbanks Jr's aide in preparation for the French landings. Member of HMS Orion Association. March 11. Aged 95.

Peter 'Ginge' Clifford Charge Chief CPO. Served 1963-96. Joined the Submarine Service 1973 and served in Conqueror, Churchill, Warspite and Resolution. Member of the British Legion Mojacar branch, Spain. March 29. Aged 66.

Brian Walburton. Served HMS Comus, Adamant, Bulwark, Undine and Perseus. Member of HMS Comus Comrades Association. April 1. Aged 79.

Donald Trott L/S. Served 1946-55 HMS St Vincent, transferring to HMS Bruce then HMS Ocean, Rame Head and St Brides Bay. Member of St Vincent and St Brides Bay Associations. April 8. Aged 83.

Albert 'Ted' Gorman CPO. Served 1928-46. Trained at HMS St Vincent and onboard HMS Emperor of India and Repulse. Served HMS Wessex, Shoreham and Southampton. Member of 1933 Field Gun crew at Olympia. Wartime service in HMS Kelly (under Mountbatten), Melbrake and HMS Hurricane (first on scene to rescue City of Benares survivors). Past member of HMS Hurricane and the Kelly Associations. February 10. Aged 100.

Robert 'Bob' Porter RM. Served 1941-53. Aboard HMS Aurora 1941-44 in the Mediterranean as Force K where she was damaged and repaired in Liverpool. She returned to the Med 1943 and took part in the fighting in Okinawa; he then served in Malaya. His last posting was Eastney RM Barracks 1952. Member of HMS Aurora Association. March 25. Aged 92.

Maurice 'Maurie' Everest PO FAA. Joined as a Junior Naval Airman, served 1954-73 in HMS Eagle (Nato Exercise Strikeback), Seahawk, Albion, Shawbury, Fulmar, Victorious, Hermes, Gamecock, Daedalus, Condor, Peregrine, Nuthatch and

Drake. April 3. Aged 75.

Terence O'Rourke PO Stores. Served 1939-47 HMS Blackwood (Londonderry Escort Group), Naval Party 1660 (Normandy) and HMS Illustrious. April 9. Aged 89.

James Gillow. Served as a L/Signalman 1940-45 on board HMS Illustrious. December 27.

Constantine 'Con' Shiels. Served as a CPO Mechanic on board Illustrious 1943-47. January 8. Aged 96.

Brian Cornford CPO ERA. Served in submarines during WW2 including Seraph 1944-45. Bought up stocks of pusser's rum and resold in wicker-covered jars. Jimena de la Frontera, Spain March 23. Aged 87.

Clive Megson AB ST. Served in HMS Sea Scout 1944-46 under the command of Lt J W Kelly. April 25. Aged 87.

Frederick Thomas Fry PO. Attended Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, from 1941 then joined the RN as a Boy Seaman serving 1945-58 in HMS Belfast (46-48), Kestrel (48-49), Mermald (St Angelo, Phoenicia 49-51), Vernon, Montclair, Adamant and Bulwark; also shore bases at Portsmouth, Chatham, Rosyth and Malta. Becoming a Diver in 1948, he was part of the 1956 team in HMS Reclaim that helped Lt George Wookey to a record depth of 600ft in standard diving dress. April 13 in Johannesburg. Aged 84.

Bryan Stuart Head CPO (SSM) BEM. As a boy seaman 1954 served in cruisers before joining the Submarine Service as a sonar operator 1959, serving in submarines Teredo, Onslaught, Ocelot and Conqueror. Awarded the BEM 1992 in recognition of his service. After retiring in 1993 as manager of the Project Control Office HMS Dolphin he moved to South Africa. April 21 in Hibberdene, Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. Aged 74.

Trevor Cooper Stoker ME1. Completed two years National Service from 1957. Served in HMS Eagle. Royal Naval Engine Room Association. April 17. Aged 76.

William 'Bill' Hunt RO2(G). Served in Loch Fada Far East commission (1962-63). Loch Fada Association. March 15. Aged 72.

Frederick 'Fred' George Green PO Shipwright. Served 1945-74. Initial training at Chatham then aboard HMS London, Gould (British Pacific Fleet), Bonaventure (Hong Kong) and Queen to join HMS Adamant in Kure, Japan (46). Served HMS Berryhead (48), Shipwright of Admiralty Floating Dock Gareloch, Scotland, instructed at the Damage Control Unit, Chatham (53), HMS Chevron (Malta), Vernon (56), Plover (59), Tiger (60-63), Collingwood (63-66), St Angelo (Malta) (66-68) and Hermes (69-70). Becoming a Marine Engineering Artificer (hull) 1970, he rejoined Tiger (72-74). On leaving the RN he joined the South African Navy, retiring as a shipwright; serving over 41 years in two navies. May 2, South Africa.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Betty Heptinstall. Served at Bletchley Park during WW2. Wife of a past chairman of Brentwood RNA. March 21. Aged 88.

Nora Beatrice Bensley. Associate member Beccles branch. March 23. Aged 93.

Anthony 'Tony' Albert Charles L/Sea and Ship's Diver. Served 1952-62 in Indefatigable, Zephyr, Duchess, Modeste and Gambia. Member of St Vincent and HMS Duchess Associations and Worthing RNA. March. Aged 75.

Thomas 'Tommy' Bunt AB. Served in HMS Barle in the Mediterranean and the Pacific during WW2. Former member of Coventry City RNA. April. Aged 89.

Tommy Burns PO Telegraphist. Served 1936-52 HMS Ganges, Cornwall, Renge, Repulse, Sultan, Pankor, Euphrates, Drake (4), St George, Vindictive, Highflyer, Ferret, Terror and Sea Eagle (2). Member of HMS Repulse/Prince of Wales' Survivor's Association and Londonderry RNA. April 13. Aged 93.

Ken Budd AB(UC3). Served 1953-62 HMS Cavalier, Carron, Relentless then submarines 1959-62. Trump, Taciturn and Finwhale. South Kent Submariners Association (previous long-serving member of Bromley branch before moving to Kent) and Life Member of Sevenoaks RNA. April 16. Aged 75.

Reginald 'Reg' Ralph PO(GI) Diver. Served 1946-73 HMS Ganges, Duke of York, Battleaxe, Hornet, Vanguard, Diligence, Ulster, Rhyll, Kenya and Excellent. Member of Portsmouth Field Gun crew 1949, '54, '57 and '60 and Field Gun crew trainer 1968, '69, '72 and '73. Eastbourne RNA. April 18. Aged 82.

The Rev Colin William Lenton and Sick Berth PO. Served 1942-46 in RN Hospital Haslar, Portsmouth and Lyness Hospital,

Scapa Flow. Former Harrogate & District Branch Chaplain. April 17. Aged 89.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan K King MBE RNR. Served Sea Cadet Corps 1940-86 and former president of TS Cleopatra, Harrogate. Awarded MBE for services to the Corps. Associate member Harrogate & District branch. April 24. Aged 85.

Frank Abbott TO. Served 1941-45 and a Normandy Veteran. Uxbridge RNA. April 13. Aged 88.

Roy Silk Torpedoman. Served 1943-47 HMS Troubridge and MMS 1090. Dartford RNA. April. Aged 85.

Cdr Charles Fredrick 'Fred' Motley. Joined 1944 aged 16 (lied about his age) as a rating pilot and learned to fly in America. On his way to the war against Japan in HMS Theseus the atomic bomb was dropped, the war ended and pilots were no longer required in large numbers so he changed branches and became a cook; he kept up his flying hours whilst he was in the RN and was known as the 'Flying Doughnut'. He took part in the Korean War, Suez Landings and was onboard HMS Hermes during the Falklands War. In charge of the RN team selected to make the wedding cake for Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer, he retired in 1984 after serving 41 ships/establishments. Member of HMS Vigo Association and President Grantham RNA. May 2. Aged 84.

Helen Coombes. Long-standing Associate member of City of Glasgow branch. May 3. Aged 95.

David Baker. Served HMS Kenya, Solebay, Narvik, Ausonia and Dolphin. Founder member of the Wigston & District branch, serving as social secretary, PRO and treasurer during his 43 years. March 23.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

Lt G B 'Brian' Brown (SD)(ME). Served in submarines Grampus, Explorer, Alaric, Opportune, Revenge, Warspite and Olympus. Morecambe Bay branch. Aged 72.

J H 'John' Gould L/Sea RP3. Submarine Service 1956-62 in Token (57), Talent (58-60) and Taciturn (60-62). Basingstoke and Dolphin branches. Aged 77.

D A 'Jan' Ham Ch Sto. Submarine Service 1954-74 in Ambush, Sturdy, Tudor, Scythian, Alcide, Onslaught, Auriga, Aeneas and Narwhal. Plymouth branch. Aged 79.

M H 'Malcolm' Jeffery AB UWA. Submarine Service 1964-74 in Opportune, Osiris, Walrus, Amphion and Oberon. Portsmouth branch. Aged 68.

T 'Terrence' Smith AB GL2. Submarine Service 1966-71 in Talent, Thule, Telemachus and Andrew. Welsh branch. Aged 76.

B R Bryan' Thomas AB RP3. Submarine Service 1954-60 in Untiring (54), Subtle (54-55), Thorough (55-56), Achernor (57-59) and Turpin (60). Scottish branch. Aged 79.

K 'Ken' Budd AB UC3. Submarine Service 1959-62 in Trump, Taciturn and Finwhale. South Kent branch. Aged 75.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

James 'Jim' M Buie AM(E). Served 1946-49 at HMS Royal Arthur, RAF Hedsorford, HMS Gosling, Daedalus and Blackcap. Regular attendee at HMS Blackcap reunion services at St Cross Appleton Thorne Church. Secretary, archivist and historian for Greater Manchester branch for many years. May 3. Aged 85.

Frederick 'Fred' Arthur Sandy AA2(AE). Served 1940-53 in 871, 847 and 810 Squadrons; RNAS Hal Far, HMS Illustrious and Queen, seeing action in the Indian Ocean. Transferred to Royal Canadian Navy and served 1953-72 at HMCF Base Shearwater and HMCS Bonaventure. Retired as CWO and was a volunteer at the Shearwater Aviation Museum. Member of Daedalus branch. April 11 Bridgewater, Canada. Aged 91.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Roger Brunskill AB. Served aboard Pincher. November 2. Aged 77.

Donald G Bourne LRM. Served aboard Espiegle. February 14. Aged 88.

David Southgate AB. Served aboard Flying Fish. April 5. Aged 87.

Thomas Cook AB. Served aboard Espiegle. April 8. Aged 87.

George Wright Ldg/Tel. Served aboard Lightfoot. April 12. Aged 88.

Geoff Mitcham Sig. Served aboard Pincher. April 21. Aged 91.

Fred Handy AB. Served aboard Chameleone. April 30. Aged 79.

Robert Baron Sto Mech. Served aboard Truelove. May 2. Aged 77.

Ask Jack

Edward J Hall L/Sea: Served in HMS Belfast at the end of WW2, last known address MJM Mess, RNB Chatham; believed to have left the RN 1956. His niece Marilyn Wilcock (nee Cook) is trying to locate him. Tel 07712 454154, write to 54 The Brambles, Devon Hills Holiday Village, Totnes Road, Paignton, TQ4 7PW or email cookie.wilcock@gmail.com

HMS Ark Royal: Has anybody got any idea what happened to the Peter Scott mural in the junior rates dining hall in Ark Royal – the one that featured in the TV series *Sailor*? Contact Robert Slawson at dmslawson@gmail.com or write to 10 Impasse Champêtre, 17770 AUMAGNE, France.

HMS Hermes: Looking to contact old mess mates of 4K3 S&S Mess, HMS Hermes, from 1977 to 1981, in connection with a reunion towards the end of this year. Date and location to follow, when numbers are known. Contact Steve Butterworth at stevebutterworth80@gmail.com or tel 07714 999355.

HMS Intrepid: Diane MacLaren is trying to trace any former shipmates of CPO Archie MacLaren, who served in HMS Intrepid 1978-82 including the Falklands; also the whereabouts of his good friend Mike (Bunny) Warren, formerly from Norwich, who was best man and chief witness at their wedding in Fareham on April 4 1986. If anyone has any photographs of Archie, Diane would be grateful of a copy. He also served in Eagle, Ark Royal and other ships. Contact Mrs Diane MacLaren, 160 Wedmore Park, Bath, Somerset BA2 1LA.

Hong Kong Flotilla (Tamar) Association: Did you serve in the Royal Navy and serve with the Hong Kong Flotilla? Peter Yates is looking for anyone who served there throughout the period from 1949, when the Hong Kong Flotilla was commissioned, and even into the '60s and beyond. However six National Servicemen served

in the Flotilla. This was remarkable as they arrived in Hong Kong late 1955 and served nearly the whole of their two years in Hong Kong. They joined together at Victory Barracks Portsmouth, trained in HMS Ocean together, took part in the Emergency, HMS Ocean's Mediterranean voyage to Cyprus and Port Said in 1955, carrying commandos and Army equipment, even whilst MUTs (Men under Training). They then took the troopship SS Empire Clyde from Liverpool to Hong Kong. They were allotted to different motor launches within the flotilla. They flew home together in a Hermes from Singapore, which took three days, and were demobbed together at Guzz in 1957. They have not met since those days. Their names were AB Hughie Mann, Pat Wilson, Michael Nasmyth-Miller, 'Flash' Toozie, tall 'Geordie' Perry, and (Yatsee) Peter Yeates. Before it is too late, Peter would like to contact them again, and tell them of the Hong Kong Flotilla Association. The association is also looking for anyone who served in the Hong Kong Flotilla, to tell them they have nearly 100 members. Peter wants to also contact his second Captain of HMML 3510 Lt (then) Francis De Bere Gibbs. He continued to command ML3510 after Peter departed Hong Kong 1957. Contact Peter Yeates at peter.yeates@tesco.net, tel 07521 372387 or write to 41 Riverside Way, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3TF.

Warspite, Ketch: The name plate from the Warspite Ketch has come into the possession of Tom Robertson. Pictures of the name plate are available on the Navy News website at <https://navynews.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=75285&sid=a36a856cd5d0ae60a5b4c4595542a039f>. As a matter of interest he wondered if anyone knows if this vessel is still afloat or has it been scrapped? Contact Tom at rma@robertsonbonding.co.uk or tel 0191 4633973.

Reunions

June 2013

HMS Surprise Reunion: A special reunion to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Coronation Review of the Fleet at Spithead as the Royal Yacht on June 15 1953. The event is at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, June 14-17, with a formal dinner on June 15. Also joining in Sunday service in St Anne's Church, Portsmouth Naval Base, on June 16. Details from Geoff Prentice at geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com or tel 01394 274813.

July 2013

HMS Comus: Portsmouth final reunion from July 26-28 at the Maritime Club Portsmouth. Get-together in the bar Friday at 1930. Saturday AGM in the Hood Room 1100 and dinner and dance in the Nelson Lounge until 2330. Sunday Church Service at St Anne's in the Naval Base at 1000. Contact Bryan Cox at bryancvx@hotmail.com or tel 01903 232720 for further information.

Roedean Old Boys Reunion Lunch: For any member who trained at HMS Vernon (Roedean School) or St Dunstons 1940-45. Wednesday July 31 from 1200-1530 at Roedean School. Please RSVP to cdo@roedean.co.uk or to Caroline Donald, Community Engagement Officer, Roedean School, Roedean Way, Brighton, BN2 5RQ, tel 01273 667 508.

September 2013

HMS Indomitable Association: Reunion and AGM at the Stratton Hotel, Blackpool, September 6-8. Details from Douglas Banks, 56 Sheffield Road, Godley, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 2PL or tel: 0161 368 6945.

HMS Ark Royal Communicators 1973-77: Reunion in Cardiff September 13-14. All Sparkers, Buntings and Gollies from that period are welcome. Contact Jeremy Smith at jsmith@greenford5.fsnet.co.uk or 5, West Ridge Gardens, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 9PE, or tel 07789 375611.

14th Carrier Air Group Reunion Association: The 19th reunion for anyone who served with 804 and 812 NAS, 1946-52, HM Ships Ocean, Glory and Theseus, or at any other time, will be on September 21 at the RNA Club, Royal Leamington Spa. Wives, partners and family members welcome. Details from Ken Lambert on Lambert5nr@btinternet.com or tel 01733 234655.

October 2013

HMS Raleigh, Benbow 30 Division, 21/7/1980: 15 of the original 22 team members have been found and held a successful reunion in Nottingham in September 2012.

Promotions

SELECTIONS for promotion to Commander Royal Navy; effective June 30 2014:

Warfare

Lt Cdr M E J Anderson; Lt Cdr S R Anderson; Lt Cdr C Ballantyne; Lt Cdr J M Bird; Lt Cdr S J Blackburn; Lt Cdr J Blackmore; Lt Cdr A J T Bush; Lt Cdr A J Canale; Lt Cdr S J P Collins; Lt Cdr S R J Crockatt; Lt Cdr V G Dale-Smith; Lt Cdr P E Dennis MBE; Lt Cdr D M J Donworth; Lt Cdr S Doubleday; Lt Cdr S W Dufosse MBE; Lt Cdr D M Fittness; Lt Cdr S A Finn; Lt Cdr P R Harper; Lt Cdr P J Haywood; Lt Cdr S W J A Higham; Lt Cdr F B G Hunt; Lt Cdr D G Jenkins; Lt Cdr D W Knight; Lt Cdr B C Lewis; Lt Cdr D Martyn; Lt Cdr D J S McKnight; A/Cdr C A Moran; Lt Cdr C S Nelson; Lt Cdr P R Newell; Lt Cdr P S Ottewell; Lt Cdr J D Patterson; Lt Cdr N M Prole; Lt Cdr P C Richardson; Lt Cdr M R Scott; Lt Cdr G I Simmonite DFC; Lt Cdr N J Soul; Lt Cdr R P Steadman; Lt Cdr S M Thomas; Lt Cdr P J E Tilden; Lt Cdr P N Tremelling; Lt Cdr M R Vartan; Lt Cdr A S Williams; Lt Cdr M L Wood; Lt Cdr N R Wood; Lt Cdr A L Woodhead.

Engineering

Lt Cdr W E Bennett; A/Cdr S Bignell; Lt Cdr A R J Blackburn; Lt Cdr M G J Bird; Lt Cdr P J Coope; Lt Cdr A J Coulthard; Lt Cdr D J Crofts; Lt Cdr P C L Durham MBE; Lt Cdr A Flynn; Lt Cdr S M Foreman; Lt Cdr A N S Graham MVO; Lt Cdr N A Hardiman; Lt Cdr M A Harrison; Lt Cdr M Hay; Lt Cdr S A Head; Lt Cdr A G James; Lt Cdr M A Kingdom; Lt Cdr A J Lewis; Lt Cdr S McLaughlin; Lt Cdr A C Moody; Lt Cdr M C O'Toole; Lt Cdr S M Rawson; Lt Cdr B Russell; Lt Cdr N M Sargent; A/Cdr R M Scream; A/Cdr M A Selway; A/Cdr W J S Simpson; Lt Cdr S D Skittirl; A/Cdr A R Stagg; Lt Cdr A J Stevens; A/Cdr W G Ubhi.

Logistics

Lt Cdr J M Bollen; Lt Cdr J N Caple; Lt Cdr R E C Cogan; Lt Cdr J S Collacott; Lt

Now hoping for a bigger reunion from October 4-7 2013 in a sunnier location – the Hotel Londres, Avda Fausto De Figueiredo, 27650, Estoril, Portugal (as one of the guys, Mr Miami – Knockor White – relocated there), the closest airport is Lisbon. Still looking for Simon Alexander, Taff Evans, Andy Fielding, Kev Mark, Kev Sloman, Darren Grindley, Slinger Wood and Windsor Brown – where are you? Contact Derek 'Russ' Russell at derek.russell@arco.co.uk or tel 07702 724747.

River Plate Veterans Association: Reunion from October 4-6 at the Holiday Inn, Armada Way, Plymouth PL1 2HU. Memorial service at the Naval War Memorial, Plymouth Hoe, on October 5 at 1100, reunion dinner at Holiday Inn. Details from Jim Smith at lyntondale@toucansurf.com or tel 01302 841806.

Hong Kong Flotilla (Tamar) Association: Annual reunion and AGM from October 4-7 at the Grand Atlantic Hotel, Beach Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1BA. Total cost of weekend £125.10pp, single room extra £15pp. £25pp deposit secures your place. Contact Peter Yeates at peter.yeates@tesco.net or tel 07521 372387 or write to 41 Riverside Way, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3TF.

RNR Postal Branch Association: Annual reunion and AGM weekend from October 11-14 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. New members welcome. More information from Ron Burch at ron.burch@btinternet.com or tel 0161 480 1717 or Fred Pitt, event organiser, on 01840 211132.

HMS St Vincent Association: AGM at St Vincent College, Gosport and reunion dinner at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on October 12. Details from Soapy Watson at soapy_watson@hotmail.com; booking forms available through Isle of Wight Tours (01983 405116) or see www.hmsstvincentsassoc.org

March 2014

HMS Ariadne Reunion: Third annual reunion at Richmore Hotel, 146 The Esplanade, Weymouth DT4 7NP (tel 01303 773435), from March 7-10 2014. Former members of any of the commissions are most welcome to attend all or part of the weekend. Contact Dave Sprinks on 01761 239221 for more details.

May 2014

HMS Landaff Comms & Electricians 1967-70: A reunion for the fifth commission is being planned to take place in the Cotswolds on May 2 and 3 2014. Contact Keith Morison at kalthmorison@msn.com or tel 07979 957360.

Cdr S E H Curtis; A/Cdr A Gennard; A/Cdr S J Hallett; Lt Cdr J H Terry; Lt Cdr J F Titmuss; Lt Cdr R A H Underwood.

Selections for promotion to Commander Royal Naval Reserve; effective June 30 2014:

Lt Cdr C Alcock; A/Cdr A S Collier; A/Surg Cdr R Graham; Lt Cdr J A Herriman; Lt Cdr J Sherriff MBE; A/Surg Cdr D A Wilkinson.

Swap drafts

AB(SC) McKie. AB(SC) at Faslane Naval Base, would like to swap with a Plymouth base. AB(SC). DESNBOD-COB-BLC-W-Refit4@mod.uk

Assignments

Capt M K Utley as CO to HMS Illustrious from May 15. Commodore S J Ancona to be promoted Rear Admiral and to be Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Military Strategy) from October 14.

Sports lottery

April 13. £5,000 – Cpl C Burke; £1,500 – AB1 D Norton; £500 – AB1 M Cox. April 20. £5,000 – AB1 A Mataitoga; £1,500 – PO J Flack; £500 – LH W Haigh. April 27. £5,000 – LH D Wharton; £1,500 – AB1 G Bettley; £500 – C/Sgt D Taylor. May 5. £5,000 – Lt N Cripps; £1,500 – Marine P Cowan; £500 – PO R Cassidy. May 11. £5,000 – Lt R Ranscombe; £1,500 – LH P Taylor; £500 – AB N Jack.

Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in July's Noticeboard must be received by **June 12**

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Periscopes restored

THE periscopes of historic submarine HMS Alliance have been replaced following refurbishment in Scotland.

A crane was used to lift the 40ft devices – one for general use, the other for attacks – into place on the World War 2-era boat at the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport.

The bronze attack scope dates back to the submarine's construction at Barrow in 1945.

Conservation on the periscopes, part of the £7 million refurbishment project to restore Alliance, was carried out by Babcock at Clyde Naval Base.

Both devices are in full working order, and will allow visitors to the boat to view Portsmouth Harbour.

The restoration project is due to be completed in the spring of 2014, though Alliance remains open to visitors unless otherwise advertised on www.submarine-museum.co.uk

Choirs tell history of the Mary Rose

A CHOIR of more than 400 people, aged from seven to in their 70s, will perform the world premiere of a major new work that tells the story of the Mary Rose in song.

The new work, Ahoy!, will be performed at the Guildhall in Portsmouth on June 24 as part of the city's Festivities.

The performance is one of the main attractions connected to the launch of the Mary Rose Museum's new visitor centre.

Comedian and actor Hugh Dennis will present the event, and the songs have been created by composer Alexander L'Estrange, combining Tudor music, sea chanties and folk songs.

Choirs from a number of schools are taking part, including St Jude's, St George's, Castle Primary in Portchester, Portsmouth Grammar School and – appropriately enough – the Mary Rose School.

For more details, see www.portsmouthfestivities.co.uk

Major returns to alma mater

CHILDREN at a Cumbria primary school had a loud and busy afternoon when a group of Royal Marines dropped in for a visit.

Headed by Maj Richard Alston RM, the group visited Fir Ends Primary School in Carlisle to tell children about the work they do as well as inform them about Joint Warrior, a multinational exercise which took place in the region.

Thundering in on a Chinook helicopter, the visitors set down on the school's playing field where the children were able to clamber onboard (pictured right).

But for Major Alston, it was more than a regular school visit, as he attended Fir Ends in the 1980s.

He said: "The visit seemed to go really well.

"All the children were really enthused by the opportunity to climb inside a helicopter, to try carrying our bergens and play with light sticks.

"We had a female Army Signaller with us, and some of the girls were interested in talking to her about her career in the Armed Forces.

Brown is the new black...

A NEW range of combat boots is being introduced to the Armed Forces – and brown is the new black.

There is greater choice in the new range, including greater provision for female staff, who previously had to choose from the same size range as men.

Personnel can choose from five categories, depending on duties to be carried out and terrain in which they are serving, and the footwear will come in brown, rather than black.

The categories are:

Desert combat – for dismounted troops conducting high levels of activity in desert environments exceeding 40°C;

Desert patrol – worn by mounted troops – typically drivers and armoured troops – conducting lower levels of activity in the desert;

Temperate Combat – as Desert Combat but for temperate climates;

Temperate Patrol – as Desert Patrol but for temperate climates;

Cold Wet Weather – worn by dismounted troops for high levels of activity in temperatures down to

minus 20°C.

Within most categories there will be two separate brands in two width fittings, from suppliers Iturri, Haix and YDS.

The new footwear is already being phased in for new recruits, and is expected to be available for general issue as replacements from this summer, although in the case of the Royal Navy the move to brown boots – mainly for RN and RM personnel engaged in ground operations such as Operation Herrick in Afghanistan – will be made when current issue stock has been exhausted.

Black boots will still be used for a number of non-camouflage outfits, such as dress uniforms and ceremonial duties.

The move was driven by the recognition of the diverse range of activities and environments in which British forces now operate around the world, and the new boots are designed to match the multi-terrain pattern camouflage used by the British military.

The boots have been tested by 2,000 troops in climates as diverse as Kenya, Canada and the UK.

Workplaces unveiled

THE children of workers at Clyde Naval Base were treated to a day of activities when 'Kids at Work Day' came to the site.

Two dozen youngsters visited on the day, and began with a trip 'doon the water' courtesy of the MOD Police's Clyde Marine Unit.

Children and parents were also hosted by Royal Marines from 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group, who took the time to show their visitors some of the wide array of equipment which the Marines use.

This was followed by a tour of the Royal Marines' new Island-class patrol vessel, which had just returned from live-firing exercises at sea.

The children also got to experience the purpose-built submarine simulator within the Naval Base's Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) building before a spot of lunch with their parents.

The afternoon brought the

opportunity for the children to go tobogganing at the Neptune Ski Centre – and there was even a little genuine snow fall to get them in the mood.

Next up was a visit to the MOD Police's Dog Section, where specialist search dog Murphy was one of the star attractions.

The base's fire station also provided children and parents with a tour and a trip in a fire engine.

The final stop was the Sportsdrome facility, where visitors who were brave enough got to use the climbing wall and practice their rope skills.

Organiser Joanne McMurdo, from Lockheed Martin UK Strategic Systems, said: "We would like to thank all the Base sections that we visited for making us feel thoroughly welcome.

"It was a fantastic day and the children got a great insight into the diversity of jobs and facilities available at HM Naval Base Clyde."



Visitors are shown an Island-class patrol boat at Faslane

Pre-school is transformed

EXCITED children couldn't wait to see how their pre-school had been transformed following recent modernisation by MOD contractor Babcock.

Capt Gary Pettitt, Captain of the Base at Devonport, was invited to cut the ribbon to re-open Plympton's Jack and Jill's Pre-School for Armed Forces' children (pictured right).

Delighted with the new facilities, school manager Sarah Hendry thanked Babcock's team, saying: "Everyone who uses the childcare setting here is thrilled with the lovely new play spaces, enabling our children to have great learning opportunities in a safe and stimulating environment."

Sarah also thanked the Sergeants' Mess at 30 Cdo IX, Stonehouse, for raising £800 for a new climbing frame, for fitting it and improving the interior play area.

Project manager Dave Nance said: "The whole building is a

much more friendly and welcoming place for children, staff and parents to use, to play and work in.

"The pre-school now has a secure perimeter, a dedicated entrance, a level path to the new play area and disabled access."

Sgt Dave Hendry, of 30 Cdo IX, is married to Sarah.

He said: "I put forward the idea of raising funds for the refurbished pre-school and generously the sergeants' mess committee and president agreed.

"Thanks to my colleagues it is now a wonderful building for all."

One of seven Ofsted-registered RN pre-schools in the Plymouth area, the facilities are run by the Royal Naval Pre-School Learning Organisation (RNPSLO), a naval charity of over 40 years' experience.

For more information about the pre-schools contact Lt Cdr Paul Evans RN, Chairman RNPSLO, on 01752 557308 or email paul.evans957@mod.uk



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Women in the House

MEMBERS of the Naval Servicewomen's Network (NSN) joined a debate in the House of Commons organised jointly by the House of Commons Diversity and Inclusion team and the Inclusive Employers organisation.

As part of the centenary celebrations of women's suffrage, the topic for debate was 'How far have we come in the race towards women's equality? Is the finishing post in sight?'

The panel included Speaker John Bercow, Seema Malhotra, MP for Feltham and Heston, and Cdr Liz Walmsley RN (rtd).

Cdr Ellie Ablett, Chairwoman of NSN, said: "This was a great opportunity for us to both benchmark our experiences in the Navy with other work sectors and to increase awareness of what women do in the Naval Service."

"The key conclusions of the panel – that we have indeed come a long way in 100 years but that momentum needs to be maintained – mirror our own situation, and will be recurring themes in the NSN's first conference."

The conference, which is open to men and women, will take place at HMS Collingwood on June 11 – see RNTM 107/13 for more details.

Tudor showcase

THE new Mary Rose museum, revealing in fascinating detail all the sunken treasures raised from the Solent seabed over 30 years ago, was due to open its doors to visitors as *Navy News* went to press, writes *Heather Lane*.

Nestling like a large oak clam shell, nudging the beams of HMS Victory, the museum promises that you will be enthralled by the most comprehensive collection of Tudor artefacts ever to be showcased in the world.

The building takes the form of a finely-crafted jewellery box with the hull at its centre and galleries running the length of the ship, each at a level corresponding to the deck levels of the original Mary Rose, while the restored artefacts provide an insight into what the ship looked like moments before it sank.

Navy News was invited to peer into this living history and 'walk the decks' of this unique time capsule cradling the ship.

I can guarantee that visitors will be as delighted as host John Lippie, Chief Executive of the Mary Rose Trust, clearly was as our group peered excitedly through the clear glass into the hot



● The new Mary Rose Museum is 'unveiled' in this specially-created image

box that is precisely controlling the atmosphere around the vessel.

John's infectious enthusiasm for the project shines through as we are introduced to specialist staff, scientists, historians, maritime archeologists and operations staff who have laboured with love to bring the museum to fruition.

He said: "The new museum marks an exciting chapter in the history of Mary Rose, providing an astonishing resource for the world to learn about the Tudors and a centre of excellence for maritime

archeology and conservation.

"The museum is testament to all those who have worked so hard on this remarkable project to locate, salvage and conserve the ship and her contents.

"We look forward to welcoming the first visitors through the doors."

The museum is quite simply a masterpiece of historical exposition, a triumph of forensic science, a remarkable architectural accomplishment and an educational jewel crowning the past 42 years of meticulous maritime

research and conservation.

It will surely become a must-see attraction amongst the rich maritime heritage on display in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard.

The Tudors have long been a fascinating period of British history for any schoolchild intrigued by Henry VIII.

The new museum pays homage to the King's passion for naval supremacy and his love of the nation's flagship.

When Mary Rose sank before his eyes 437 years ago in 1545, it was a devastating blow to the country.

Yet King Henry would be amused and no doubt proud that the wreck of his 'noblest ship of sail', his sailors' way of life and their humble, yet priceless, possessions now remain preserved forever, only a few metres from where she was built over 500 years ago.

Tickets cost £17 for the new museum or £26 for all Historic Dockyard attractions including the museum. Tickets are on sale at www.historicdockyard.co.uk or in person at the Historic Dockyard.

To continue supporting the Trust and learn more visit www.maryrose.org

Mersey goes to Jersey

FISH ship HMS Mersey and URNU patrol boats Blazer and Smiler, plus two Royal Marines ORC raiders, a Lynx helicopter from RN Air Station Yeovilton, the RN Presentation Team and the Royal Marines Band Collingwood comprised the largest Senior Service presence at Jersey Boat Show in its five-year history.

Mersey spent much of her three days alongside at St Helier Marina with her gangway open to visitors.

The show was blessed by the finest weather of the year – over the May bank holiday weekend to boot – which meant a large turnout from Channel Islanders and tourists.

The Portsmouth-based patrol ship's sailors

demonstrated what they do to protect the nation's fishing stocks and their wider role of safeguarding our shores.

In addition, their ship hosted a capability demonstration for local VIPs and sailors took part in numerous events ashore, from prizegiving ceremonies to attending a gala concert by the Royal Marines Band.

"It was a delight to take part in the boat show for the second time in two years," said the ship's Executive Officer Lt Greg Powell.

"Opportunities for the general public to meet sailors at work are rare and I would like to thank Jersey for hosting us so well."

Pensions calculator is launched

A NEW pension calculator is due to be delivered on June 3.

The upgraded calculator will provide a forecast of pension benefits that have been accrued under existing schemes until March 31 2015, and a forecast of benefits that could be earned under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 15 (AFPS15) from April 1 2015.

A link to the new pension calculator will be published very shortly.

Personnel are reminded that the forecast of pension benefits generated by the calculator is for guidance purposes only and does not constitute a definite entitlement to the benefits stated.

The actual pension benefits paid are likely to be slightly different to those forecast by the calculator since in entering their data personnel will be estimating when they are likely to promote and at what rank they will be when they leave the Service.

The upgraded calculator can still be used by those with Transitional Protection (that is, those personnel born on or before April 1 1967) to provide a forecast of benefits, even though they will not be affected by AFPS15.

It continues to remain important that Service personnel take charge of their own personal finances and understand their pension entitlements and what it is the pension calculator is telling them.

To this end a number of DINs have been published on AFPS 15 and are available on the defence intranet.

Yeovilton attracts fast jets

TWO of the world's most exciting fast jet displays will make their Air Day debuts at Yeovilton on Saturday July 13.

Not currently scheduled to perform at any other UK air shows this year, the Swiss Air Force F/A-18C Hornet and the Czech Air Force JAS-39 Gripen will be heard in Somerset skies along with the thunder of the iconic Vulcan bomber XH558 in a

display that also features the RAF Typhoon FGR4 and the Belgian Air Component F-16AM.

Other participants at the event, which won a tourism gold award last year, include the Red Arrows, the new Wildcat and the RN Historic Flight's Swordfish.

Discounted advance tickets are available from www.royalnavy.mod.uk/yeovilton-airday or by calling 08445 781 781.



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Heritage tour of Pompey

MORE than 50 cadets and adult volunteers spent a weekend on board HMS Bristol to enjoy a heritage tour of the Portsmouth area.

The cadets, from Northants and Leicester District, were joined by colleagues from Market Harborough Army Cadets and Rushden Air cadets, with whom the district has close links.

During their stay they visited HMS Victory and HMS Warrior 1860 – a good chance to see how life on board ship changed from the harsh conditions on Nelson's flagship to the relative space on board the Victorian ironclad (and then compare that to a ship designed in the 1960s, HMS Bristol).

While in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard the visitors also looked in at the National Museum of the Royal Navy and Action Stations, and ventured across the water to Gosport and Explosion!, the Museum of Naval Firepower.

Training was not neglected over the weekend, with all cadets who attended completing at least three SCC training modules.

District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Chris Read RNR said: "Despite the poor weather, all attending had a fantastic time and enjoyed the experience of being accommodated in the Type 82 destroyer HMS Bristol."

Pennant for Methil junior pair

TWO junior members of Methil and District unit have been awarded their Commodore's Pennant for the hard work and enthusiasm they have shown towards the Corps.

JLCs Mya Dair and Finlay Maguire have completed each of the training sections for community, environment and waterborne activities, along with seamanship.

To be awarded the Commodore's Pennant the cadets have to be proactive within the unit and complete additional tasks, including taking responsibility for young cadets in their division.

PO (SCC) Kevin Ralph, Officer in Charge of the Junior Division, said: "The cadets work hard for their awards but the best part about being a junior cadet is the fun you can have – and being their instructor you have to have a lot of energy and like getting wet."

Unit CO S/Lt (SCC) Fiona Sekkat RNR said: "Our Junior Division is going from strength to strength and the young people coming on board are wonderful."

"The cadets aboard enjoy their time at TS Ajax, and this is down to the hard work of the instructors."

"I wish I knew where our junior cadets' get all their energy from; I am exhausted by the time I get home."

Marlow host formal mess dinner

MARLOW unit hosted more than 50 supporters at a St George's Night Dinner at their unit headquarters in Wethered Road.

Guests at the evening included the Town Mayor, Cllr Jocelyn Towns, Deputy Mayor Cllr Suzanne Brown, Head of the Defence Reform Unit Cdre Nick Roberts and the Attorney General, Dominic Grieve MP.

During the evening, guests, instructional staff, trustees, parents and other supporters

of the unit enjoyed a three-course meal in the style of a formal Royal Naval mess dinner, with the aim of raising much-needed funds and celebrate cadet achievements over the past year.

In his speech, Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Nick Jones RNR praised the young people for all their hard work throughout the past year and went on to say that he was "particularly proud of the unit's participation in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant on

the River Thames last summer."

Afterwards he added: "It was excellent to see such great support for the dinner from across the local community, particularly being able to welcome our local MP to the unit for the first time in many years."

Events like this dinner provide vital funds towards the charity's annual running costs of up to £12,000, and help to keep activities accessible for young people in the area.

Guernsey chosen as main carnival charity

GUERNSEY unit has been confirmed as the main beneficiary of this year's Harbour Carnival, which will take place on 9 August 2013.

The event is organised by the Guernsey Round Table and sponsored by RBC Wealth Management.

Lt (SCC) Paul Mooney RMR, Commanding Officer of the unit, said he was thrilled that they have been chosen in this way.

"The money raised should enable us to purchase a new Trinity 500 boat, allowing cadets to gain boating qualifications that complement those earned during

the winter months," he said.

"Any leftover funds will go towards renting a new headquarters as we are currently based in the Sydney Vane House in Admiral Park, which is due to be re-developed."

"This couldn't have come at a better time for us."

Michael Ozanne, of the Harbour Carnival Organising Committee, said: "It's always difficult to pick the main beneficiary from all the applications that come in."

"However, the Guernsey Sea Cadets produced a compelling case highlighting how they would use the funds received, as well as the enthusiastic offer of the Sea Cadets to help before and at the event."

Alan Pearce, Chairman of the Guernsey Leadership Team, RBC Wealth Management, said: "We're now in our sixth year of sponsoring the Harbour Carnival and we are really pleased that the Guernsey Sea Cadets have been chosen."

"I'm sure that they'll be a real asset as we fund-raise for this great community event – it would be fantastic to beat last year's record-breaking amount of £24,000."

As the main beneficiary, the Guernsey Sea Cadets will receive 50 per cent of the total amount raised by the event, with the remaining 50 per cent going to other local causes.

NTC get-together

THE Nautical Training Corps' 69th Founders Day event is to be held on the beach at Littlehampton's East Green on June 9.

The event is designed to showcase the skills learned by members of the NTC – which is a separate organisation to the Sea Cadet Corps – and will include music, parades and demonstrations from around the 20 units and 500 or more cadets and volunteers.

Captain's Medal for Melis

A FORMER Officer in Charge of Crewe Girls Nautical Training Contingent (GNTC) was awarded the Captain's Medal for 50 years' service by Cdr (SCC) Janet Evans RNR.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Melis Brereton RNR (rtd) completed her 50 years at Crewe unit both as an active officer within the unit and now the treasurer on the unit management committee, and becomes the 15th person to receive this award in the North West area alone.

Melis started at Crewe GNTC and eventually

became the Officer in Charge before both the Sea Cadets and the GNTC merged in 1992.

She also served offshore on MFV7, a Sea Cadet training vessel, as a cook, and was commended by the Area Officer when the ship was decommissioned in the early 1990s.

Melis also enjoyed roles at district level, before returning to Crewe to assist in admin and then committee roles.

The presentation took place at Crewe's HQ in front of present-day cadets and instructors.

Sweet gesture by Worcester

A GROUP of Worcester unit cadets have donated 40 Easter eggs to their local children's hospice.

Some of the cadets and adult volunteers visited the Acorns Hospice on Good Friday to hand over the goodies (pictured above with hospice staff).

Each cadet and adult member of the unit was asked to donate an Easter egg – or eggs – and Officer in Charge CPO (SCC) Paul Ormsby said he was very pleased with the response and looks forward to the unit's future engagements in helping Acorns in many ways.

He also noted that although 40 was a good total, it was there to be beaten next year...

Acorns cares for life-limited and life-threatened children and young people, and their families, across the heart of England.

These youngsters are not expected to reach adulthood and require specialist care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The hospice currently supports around 640 children and almost 900 families, including those who are bereaved.

Acorns is the only organisation that provides this level of care

to these vulnerable youngsters whilst offering a range of support services to the whole family to help them cope at every stage of their child's life and beyond into bereavement.

The hospice provides tailored nursing care for each child – short breaks, emergency and end-of-life care.

Far from bored by capital board game

ALMOST 50 Junior Sea Cadets from Western District, London Area explored major tourist attractions in London as part of a fun-filled weekend of activities.

Issued with specially-designed Monopoly-type boards, the cadets had to shake the dice to find out where they would head to first.

Once that was decided, they had to navigate their way to the attraction using the Tube, take some photos and learn something about the attraction before shaking the dice again.

The majority of the groups visited about six places each, with destinations including Buckingham Palace, HMS Belfast, Marble Arch, the London Eye, Cutty Sark, Trafalgar Square, the Elizabeth Tower housing Big Ben (right), Horse Guards Parade, Tower Bridge, St Paul's Cathedral

– and New Scotland Yard as Go To Jail.

The groups could also land on a 'Chance' square, obliging them to select one of three envelopes with a mystery destination and a task to complete.

'Chances' included building a paper tower at the Tower of London, reciting the Sea Cadet Promise at Speakers' Corner or designing a monument at the Albert Memorial.

The groups then had to head back to Rickmansworth unit for a well-earned dinner.

They spent the Sunday painting T-shirts to remind them of their trip round London, cooking food on an open fire, making peppermint creams and playing games.

Over the weekend the cadets achieved training modules, as well as learning valuable life skills such



as navigation on the Tube.

All the Cadets returned home tired, but very happy and

looking forward to the next Junior Weekend, planned to coincide with the Giant Sleepover weekend!



● AB James Savory presents his RNR bounty to PO (SCC) Richard Priest, OIC of Trowbridge unit

Bounty donated to unit

A ROYAL Navy Reservist has donated his training bounty to Trowbridge unit.

AB James Savory, of HMS Flying Fox in Bristol, made a donation of £250 to the unit at their headquarters, TS Achilles.

James has been a volunteer adult instructor with Trowbridge since August last year, but is now moving away from the area, so as a parting gift he donated his annual training bounty that he receives from the RNR.

The money will go towards sending a group of Trowbridge cadets to London on a visit to HMS Belfast and other historic sites around the city, and anything remaining will be used to help keep the unit running.

James said: "I am proud to support the Sea Cadet Corps and wish the unit much success in the future."

"It is important to allow the youth of the country to take part in activities which will benefit their future and give them an insight into a potential future naval career."

The CO of Trowbridge, PO (SCC) Richard Priest, said: "All Sea Cadet units in the UK are run as charities and donations such as this are the life blood for us."

"We are delighted that AB Savory has made this generous personal donation."

James added: "I believe all young people should be given the opportunity to visit some of our most important national treasures such as HMS Belfast, and I know I have made a difference by funding my local cadets to go on a visit which would usually be difficult to fund."

Petchey gathering

LONDON Area Sea Cadets have hosted their annual Jack Petchey Awards Ceremony for the 2012-13 year nominations at the Kensington Great Hall.

The Jack Petchey Foundation supports the work of youth organisations across the capital, of which London Area Sea Cadets is one.

Waltham Forest unit nominates cadets three times a year; the cadets who attended this year were OC Naveed, OC Meakin, SC1 Jones and SC1 D'Arcy – nominated because of their hard work and dedication.

The unit also attended the annual Royal Society of St George Dinner at Guildhall.

A total of 15 Sea Cadets, Juniors and Royal Marines Cadets attended, lining the stairs for the VIP guests and walking guests to their tables.

Beccles triple

FOR the third year running one of the Lord Lieutenant's Cadets for Suffolk has been chosen from the ranks of Beccles unit.

LC Emily Buchanan travelled to Ipswich TA Centre to receive her award from Lord Tollemache, the Lord Lieutenant for Suffolk.

The award means that Emily will be invited to attend events when members of the Royal Family may be in attendance.

Her older brother, Nathan, is a serving Royal Marine and was also a member of the Beccles Unit, as is her younger brother, Angus.



SUPPORT YOUR SEA CADETS

Volunteer, donate or even leave a legacy

Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000

SEA CADETS

A charity registered in England and Wales 313013 and in Scotland SC057008

St Albans back their frigate

SEA Cadets from St Albans unit lined the streets as officers and ratings from their namesake frigate marched to exercise their rights of Freedom of the City.

Following the parade, Cdr Andrew Block, the Commanding Officer of HMS St Albans, presented the unit with the burgee they had won by dint of their achievements over the last 12 months.

PO (SCC) Steve Heard, the Officer in Charge at St Albans unit, said: "It was an amazing day.

"We have a great relationship with the ship, and we were delighted to be asked to be part of the event.

"We were particularly pleased that Cdr Block was able to make the presentation to us.

"We have worked hard over the last few years to raise our standards, and to reach burgee standard so quickly is a testament to the volunteer staff and cadets.

"This accolade follows on from the Herts District Trophy won last year for being the best Sea Cadet unit in Hertfordshire."

Each unit in the Corps is inspected annually and awarded points on a range of criteria including activity, achievements, boating hours, drill, dress and bearing and the general running of the unit.

The top 25 per cent of units are awarded a burgee, with the next 50 percent taking a pennant.

RHS take top dinghy title

A TEAM from Royal Hospital School obliterated the opposition to win the British Schools Dinghy Racing Association Hoad Shield for the first time.

Second only to the Nationals in terms of importance, the competition saw 20 teams competing for honours, and RHS had a tough draw, including the National champions for the past three years, Magdalen College School (MCS).

But all were swept aside with varying degrees of ease – including taking first, second and third places against MCS – and they finished the competition unbeaten.

RHS Director of Sailing Andrew Nutton said: "This British Schools Dinghy Racing Association competition has been running for 27 years and has only ever been won by five schools.

"On the day, RHS beat four of those five schools to win the prestigious Hoad Shield – a superb effort by our team racers in the year that RHS launches its Sailing Academy."

RHS paddlers also took the top two places in the CCF section of the gruelling Devizes to Westminster canoe marathon.

The school was established in Greenwich in 1712 for the sons of seafarers, and has long had a strong connection with the Royal Navy.

Pulling in the funds for new sailing ship

ALMOST 200 units helped the Sea Cadet Corps smash its target of rowing around the world in 80 hours – and gave the new training ship appeal a healthy boost in the process.

That means half the units in the country were onboard, whether on the water or in gyms – a demonstration of the enthusiasm and determination that can be harnessed when the Corps works together in a common cause.

The target set had been 24,900 miles – the length of the Equator, give or take a mile – but the Corps powered on to a second 'lap', finishing at 26,815 miles.

MSSC Headquarters staff in London estimate that, as of the middle of May, the units' efforts, along with that of a team from HQ, will have raised at least £40,000 for the New Ship Appeal to fund a replacement for TS Royalist.

Befitting the 'round the world' theme, friends from overseas also played their part.

Through the International Sea Cadet Association, cadets from South Africa, Bermuda, Australia, Canada and Singapore all rowed some miles.

The Royal Marines also played their part, with members of 40 Commando RM Recovery Troop and Hasler Company rowing some miles to help the Corps reach their target.

We can obviously only provide a snapshot of the efforts put in around the UK, but by way of example...

Sheppey unit, in the Southern Area, clocked up just over 400 miles, while Worthing, supported by Chichester and Gosport, rowed 143 miles on rowing machines in the Guildbourne Shopping Centre in Worthing.

And while all three units cheered each other on, a competitive edge crept in which pushed the participants to the limit.

In the Northern Area, despite spells of poor weather, cadets and staff of Orkney unit managed 130 miles in a beautifully scenic row.

Lochaber unit had two boats out on the Caledonian Canal in the shadow of Ben Nevis, and ignoring the cold, wet and windy weather, a dozen cadets took part, rowing a total of 45 miles.

Northumberland and Tyne South Districts involved more than 120 people, who managed to row more than 500 miles collectively.

Harrogate unit, in Eastern Area, rowed 232 miles over the weekend, while almost 50 people supported the Flitwick and Ampthill unit event, rowing 100 miles and enjoying a barbecue by way of reward.

Portrush unit in Northern Ireland not only achieved their target of rowing 36 miles on the River Bann from Lough Neagh



● Some of the HQ rowing squad and supporters celebrate at Lambeth Road

to Coleraine but did some useful work on the way as well.

Camping out for two nights along the way, the cadets – in Trinity 500 boats – helped clean the river by removing fence posts and driftwood from the water, and also rescued a young lamb that had strayed from its mother, returning it to dry land.

In the London Area, Rickmansworth and Watford unit rowed both on rowing machines and on water, totting up just over 265 miles.

On the third day of the HQ Row, Sunbury and Walton unit not only provided the team with refreshments at their unit, but also rowed some miles by following the team to the next lock.

Rhyl unit, in the North West, completed 100 miles around Rhyl Marine Lake, while several units from Liverpool District completed their rowing challenge at the district boating station – and they made a mockery of their original target of 400 miles by blasting through 888.5 miles by the end of the event.

Cadets in the South West had kinder weather than their colleagues in the far north, and the rowers of Bristol Adventure unit attracted

well over 100 people to take part on the water and on rowing machines, totalling just short of 410 miles in brilliant weather (and getting themselves on BBC Radio Bristol into the bargain).

Neath and District unit also put on a good show, completing 100 miles.

Shirley unit saw more than 70 people go afloat at Olton Mere in four Trinity 500s (two on loan from Redditch and Bromsgrove unit), ranging in age from six-year-old Matthew Mohan to Shirley Day, aged 77.

So, on to the Headquarters team and their 100-mile row from Abingdon to Tower Bridge.

The entire team thoroughly enjoyed the challenge (they said...) and it was an excellent team-building experience.

Despite half the team being novice rowers, they actually rowed ahead of schedule each day.

Staff and cadets from Abingdon and Oxford units were there at the launch of the HQ Row to wave them off – and there was a special thank you to A/Lt (SCC) Kevin Anderson RNR, CO of Abingdon, who was actually part of the HQ team and was rowing with them

right until the finish.

The team were overwhelmed by the level of support from so many units and volunteers who helped them in various ways.

Oxford, for example, not only accommodated the team on the Wednesday evening, but also put on a fantastic three-course dinner, which was served by the cadets.

Maidenhead also hosted the team, on the Thursday night – despite having the Unit's RNP on the same date, which is a true testament to their hospitality.

Happily, the distraction of having the stellar rowing team on their patch did not put them off their stride, and the unit earned themselves a burgee.

The final night's accommodation was provided by Kingston unit.

Sunbury and Walton also deserve a special mention as they provided the team with tea and cakes at their unit on Saturday, and also followed the team to the next lock in their own boats.

The final leg of their row was probably the toughest in terms of physical effort as they were rowing against the Thames tide, but the whole team's perseverance allowed them to push through and reach the finish.

The HQ target was to raise £4,000, but as Navy News went to press they had already reached £10,370.

While thanking all those who contributed, the team pointed out that if you haven't done so already you can still donate – see www.justgiving.com/row-the-world

A final thank-you from the rowers to the support team, who kept them all safe and ensured the event was such a success.

For more stories and pictures from individual units see www.facebook.com/seacadetsuk

Youth work award for 'caring' John

CPO (SCC) JOHN MacDonald, of Ardrossan unit, has been chosen as Youth Worker of the Year (Uniformed Services) by YouthLink Scotland for the outstanding work he has done for young people at his unit.

John has been Officer in Charge at Ardrossan since 2009 and those who know John describe him as a remarkable man – passionate, caring and truly genuine.

John works as a Community Development Worker with North Ayrshire Council and volunteers to run his local unit every week.

He gives up his spare time in the interests of youngsters, encouraging them to take on new challenges and experiences.

This is the sixth National Youth Worker of the Year Awards, celebrating and recognising outstanding service and performance by managers, youth workers and peer educators in the youth work field.

Awards were handed out in a total of 12 categories.

Evesham win football trophy

EVESHAM unit are celebrating after scooping the coveted Guinness Trophy at the national football competition held at RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire.

The South West Area Senior Boys team went through the competition unbeaten, and finally gained gold by beating a very competitive Northern Ireland team 6-2 in the final.

Evesham were also competing in the Senior and Junior Girls competitions, where both teams performed well.

Commanding Officer CPO (SCC) Keith Field was delighted at the result for the South West Area.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor presented the trophy to the winning Senior Boys squad – POC Matthew Annis, MC Jake Elson, LC Jack Cole, POC Jordan Griffiths, POC Joshua Macklin, POC Timothy Johnson and MC Daniel Mallinson.

European trip for Hastings

HASTINGS Sea Cadets and their Royal Marines counterparts were once again invited to join the Victory in Europe Day Parade in their twin town of Oudenaarde in Belgium.

The cadets enjoyed a weekend away, joining the Hastings and Oudenaarde Twin Town Committee and attending the VE Day Anniversary Parade.

The cadets also had the opportunity to visit sites of interest to encourage greater understanding and involvement in European affairs.

London units at HMS Cossack reunion

CADETS from Southwark and Clapton and Hackney units travelled to the South Coast to support the HMS Cossack Association Dinner and Parade in Portsmouth (right).

The cadets visited HMS Excellent during the weekend, staying onboard HMS Bristol.

Cadet T Wood represented TS Cossack at the dinner, where he piped the dinner call alongside an HMS Cossack veteran.

He enjoyed a formal dinner, sitting on the top table, where he dined with some Norwegian members of the association, who had connections with the Altmark incident during World War 2.

Cadet Wood was presented with the Admiral Vian Award, for being the most improved cadet at Southwark, by Admiral Sir James Eberle, President of the HMS



Cossack Association.

The following day all cadets participated in the parade, with Cadet H Tutt carrying the standard alongside an HMS Cossack veteran.

TS Cossack provided a small marching band, and POC B Wood led the platoon for the march-past.

The salute was taken by Sir James, who then spoke to the cadets individually.

Happy birthday to Bradford

BRADFORD Sea Cadets held a party to celebrate their unit's 75th anniversary.

Formed in April 1938, the unit took the name TS Aurora from HMS Aurora, the warship adopted by the city from funds raised during Warship Weeks.

Cadets past and present, together with families, friends and supporters, enjoyed a rare sunny afternoon with a number of stalls and games.

The day ended with JC Farihad Younis cutting the birthday cake with CO Lt (SCC) Lynn Bullock RNR (pictured right).

Meanwhile, three Bradford cadets have returned from a week offshore, on board TS Jack Petchey, sailing from Portsmouth to the Isle of Man.

LC Abbas Younis said: "As well as developing my boat-handling and navigational skills, I have learned a lot about working as part of team in sometimes challenging circumstances. I have learned a lot but had great fun."

OC Rahees Younis (14) and AC Charlie Noon (14) said "This was a much larger vessel than any of us had handled before so it was an exciting time. No other course we have been on has been as much fun and exciting whilst still teaching us."



Cats, dogs, springboks and Jaws

WALVIS Bay.

Now there's a port which doesn't feature too often in *Navy News* – certainly not since 2005 at least, the last time the White Ensign was seen in the harbour of a Namibian city.

Devonport frigate HMS Argyll became the first RN ship since HMS Edinburgh to visit the African nation, paying a two-day visit.

Despite the lightning-fast pitstop, there was nevertheless sufficient time to squeeze in charity work, football and golf fixtures, shark fishing and a formal reception as well as the multitude of official calls. Commanding Officer Cdr Tim Neild paid to military and civil dignitaries during port visits.

A team of ten willing volunteers headed to an animal sanctuary as part of an outreach programme (pictured right by LA (Phot) Pepe Hogan).

The sanctuary, home to a large number of stray cats and dogs, many of which are in a poor physical state, was painted and restored thanks to the sailors' efforts – aided by children from the local community who spend many hours helping at the sanctuary; they were delighted to have the extra help.

"It was great to be able to help make a difference to the lives of the poor animals. Some of the animals were in a very bad way but hopefully the work we have done will make them more comfortable before they are re-homed," said ET Dominic Mitchell.

On the sporting front, Argyll's football team tested their skills against a Namibian Navy team.

Unfortunately the match was played in the middle of a sandstorm and, with the hosts more used to the testing conditions, they triumphed 3-1.

"I've never played football in a sandstorm so it was a real

experience," said Std Tony Biggar, who also plays for the RN U19 side in central midfield. "Their team was really strong so we can't just use the weather as an excuse though."

HMS Argyll's golf team also hit the greens once again with a round at one of the world's five all-grass desert courses.

There were large numbers of springboks and other animals wandering freely around the course – clearly not deterred by the human presence. LS Ed McFarlane led the way with an impressive 42 points in the Stableford competition.

The Namibian coastline provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a number of Argyll's crew to go shark fishing from one of the local beaches.

There was no need for the team to come back with tales of the one that got away as six out of the ten fishermen caught sharks ranging from 50-70 kilos. After the customary photographs, all the creatures were returned unharmed to the sea.

"I've never even been fishing before so for a first experience to actually land a shark is one of the best feelings I've ever had!" said LReg Nathan Blight. "My shark was the second biggest of the day – although I thought it was the biggest, and weighed about 65 kilos. It took me over 40 minutes to bring in and I was absolutely exhausted afterwards."

On the final evening in Walvis Bay a formal reception was held aboard the frigate with the British High Commissioner, Marianne Young, as the guest of honour.

As Argyll sailed from Walvis Bay to South Africa, she was looking forward to a two week maintenance period to prepare her for the second half of her seven-month Atlantic deployment, while the ship's company would get the opportunity to recharge batteries and take some well-deserved leave.



REVIEW

The shift away from East of Suez

THE mid-to-late 1960s have certain similarities with the last few years.

A major defence review which seemed to abolish the Royal Navy's aircraft carrier capabilities was a body blow to the service, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

In some ways the situation was worse, as the Wilson administration moved on to abolish the entire 'East of Suez' role upon which the Royal Navy's posture had been based since 1957.

This crisis has been studied before but never with full access to the documents. Edward Hampshire has now filled this gap with an excellent study, first presented as a King's College London PhD dissertation which I had the pleasure of examining and now as a book in the series published by Ashgate of Farnham for the Corbett Centre for Maritime Studies.

The book is an analysis of Naval policy in the period 1964 to 1970 and adds significantly to my account of the period in my broader study Vanguard to Trident.

Important new emphases are Hampshire's pointing out the more natural alignment of Secretary of State Denis Healey with the RAF's senior officers who came from a similar social background to himself, rather than the contemporary upper

middle class Admiralty Board.

He also makes the crucial point of the decline of the influence of Lord Louis Mountbatten, in whose shadow the Navy had been protected for the previous decade.

Hampshire also explains more fully the inability of the Navy to get its bureaucratic act together and explains convincingly that it was the inadequate coordination of arguments rather than insufficient strength of advocacy that was the main bureaucratic problem.

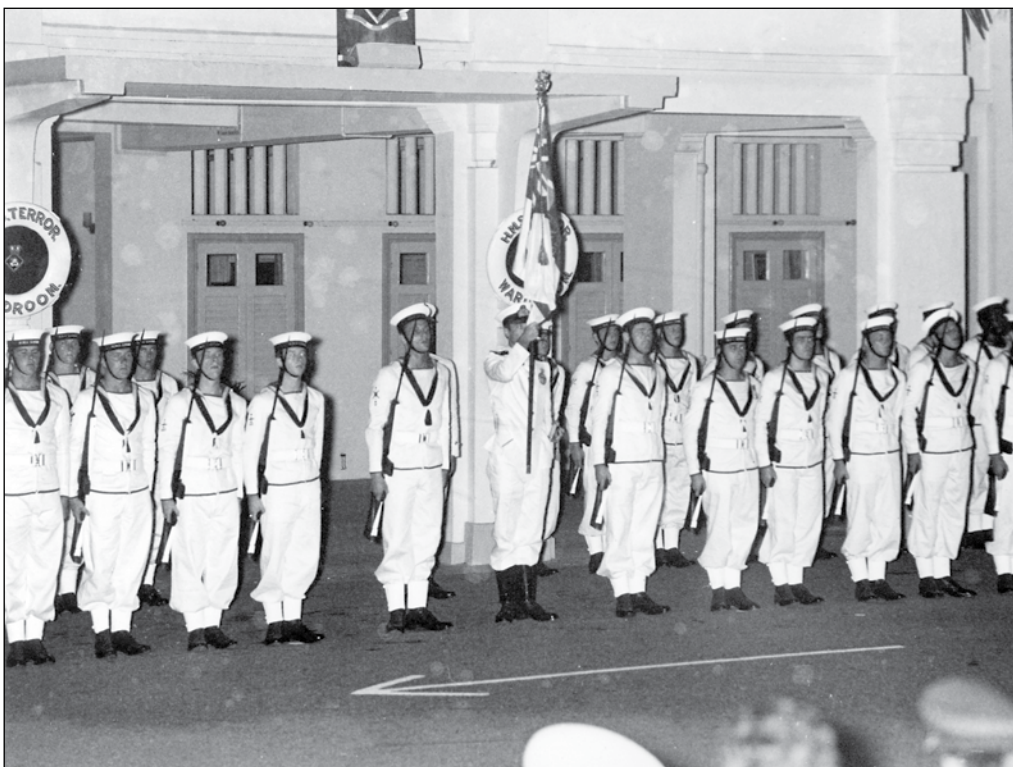
His criticisms of Admiral Sir David Luce, Vice Admiral Sir Frank Hopkins and Minister of State Christopher Mayhew as Whitehall warriors are especially telling.

He also defends Varyl Begg's effective attempt to produce a realistic procurement plan out of the near fiasco of the Future Fleet Working Party.

Not least of the important aspects of the Hampshire revision is his emphasis on the way the Navy rapidly took advantage of developments in NATO strategy to emphasise the Med as a place where capabilities formerly deployed East of Suez might find a new strategic home – despite the doubts of the Foreign Office.

He uses this to cast doubts on my characterisation of the post 1971 Fleet as an 'Eastlant Navy'. There is much in Ed's argument which makes it a little odd that the title of the book is 'From East of Suez to Eastern Atlantic'. If the author is correct – and I agree that I did miss a trick in *V to T* – there ought to be at least a question mark in the book's title or perhaps its revision along the lines of the title of this review.

It was indeed only with the Defence Review in 1975 that the Eastern Atlantic gained sole priority (at least at a declaratory level) as one of the four 'pillars' of British defence policy – and as



● The Queen's Colour of the Far East Fleet is paraded for the last time at HMS Terror, October 1 1971, before being transferred to HMS Eagle to be laid up in St Ann's Church in Portsmouth as Singapore base closes after 155 years

THE GROVE REVIEW

Hampshire correctly points out the fleet still retained remarkable global reach.

One of the most useful aspects of this book for current policy makers is the excellent way Ed Hampshire demonstrates how in their different ways Begg and his successor as First Sea Lord, the much more charismatic Sir Michael Le Fanu, put the Navy back on its feet after the body blow of the carrier decision.

The successful initiation of what became the Invincible class, with its STOVL air group, was the most important outward and visible sign of this success in creating an affordable naval procurement policy with maximum strategic flexibility. Similarly today, the rebirth of a real carrier capability along the lines of that originally intended in 1998 will be the test of the current Naval Staff.

The only problem with the book

is sloppy copy editing. There is no excuse for this in a relatively-slim 252-page volume, for which the publishers are demanding such a high price.

The overall quality of the copy editing is indifferent at best. There are too many niggling small mistakes which ought to have been corrected and also a few errors of content – but only small ones.

It is however surprising, especially in the context of a book in which the carrier question is a key point, that the position of the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff as Fifth Sea Lord and chief of Naval

aviation is omitted. The post did indeed lapse, but it was still there in the period the author discusses as he sets the scene at the beginning of the study. Moreover, Sir Frank Hopkins, on whose shortcomings as bureaucratic politician Ed Hampshire places some emphasis, was the last officer with this title, whose abolition perhaps deserved more than a mention.

There are also a few small problems with descriptions of aircraft. TSR-2 was not a swing wing strike aircraft, indeed this feature was unfairly held against it in comparison with its intended successor, the F-111. The Sea Vixen, although it did have a nuclear capability was not the predecessor of the Buccaneer as the Fleet's main nuclear strike aircraft; that was the Scimitar.

The most annoying thing about these niggles, is that they detract from what is otherwise an exceptionally good and important piece of work which should put its author in his due place in the front rank of the historians of the 20th-Century Royal Navy.

Dr Hampshire is currently engaged in ground breaking work on the naval policy of the Thatcher administration which will be as important as this study.

Formerly of the Public Record Office, he is now lecturing at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, that will give useful teaching experience for the upward academic mobility he richly deserves.

Ed Hampshire's *From East of Suez to the Eastern Atlantic: British Naval Policy 1964-70* (Ashgate, ISBN 9780754669722 £65) It is available as an E-book in two formats – as a PDF (ISBN 9781409466130) and in ePub (ISBN 9781409466147). It is advertised for Kindle from Amazon at £45.50. However one gets hold of it, it must be read by anyone who wants to understand the dynamics of British Naval policy in the past half century.

'World-class facilities'

YOU wait months for state-of-the-art sporting facilities to be ready...

...and then three open in the space of about ten days in Portsmouth.

For tennis players of all abilities, there's a new joint MOD-civilian centre. For players of rugby and football, new all-weather 3G pitches. And for lovers of workouts, swimming and squash a refurbished HMS Temeraire.

All told it marks an investment of £1.2m in RN sport and gives, says the RN's head of physical development, Capt Mark Durkin, "world-class facilities" and probably the best sports complex on the south coast of England right now.

In the case of Temeraire, the home of RN sport and the school of physical training, the Grade II-listed old gymnasium received a £600,000 makeover with upgrades to the five championship squash courts, a new cardio vascular suite, an impressive glass-fronted entrance, and new offices and reception area.

The adjacent rugby and football pitches have been re-laid with 3G artificial turf and are lit by energy-saving floodlights.

And the old tennis facilities at the foot of Burnaby Road are gone, replaced with a four-court centre with a new roof, new courts, car park, floodlighting and fully-overhauled changing facilities.

The centre will be managed by Portsmouth Tennis Academy on the Navy's behalf and will be open to civilians and RN personnel.

The tennis centre was officially opened by new First Sea Lord



● **First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas holds court with youngsters at the opening of the new-look tennis academy in Portsmouth**

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East

Admiral Sir George Zambellas, while Rear Admiral Matt Parr, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff, performed the honours at the new-look Temeraire.

As for the 3G pitches, rugby chiefs decided a more rigorous christening was in order.

US Portsmouth took on their Devonport counterparts, upholding a tradition going back to the 1870s when Devonport Albion and Portsmouth Navy met

for the annual Inter-Port Cup – the longest-running fixture in RN rugby union.

Devonport – higher in the league and stronger on paper thanks to a US Portsmouth side depleted by injury – triumphed as predicted, 46-5.

The pitch itself is a key part of both the Royal Navy and US Portsmouth's initiative to get more rugby played more often.

As for the overall investment in

sport in Portsmouth, Capt Durkin said: "Physical fitness is a vital part of Naval life and in HMS Temeraire and associated sports grounds the Royal Navy now has truly world-class facilities that probably comprise the best sports complex anywhere on the south coast of England."

"Our busy serving men and women deserve top-quality facilities to improve their physical development."

Engineers can't wait for tee time

THE RN Engineers open **golf** championships return to the China Fleet Club at Saltash on September 2 – the place where it all started back in 1994.

The event – known in golfing circles simply as 'the Engineers' – is open to serving and ex-RN and RFA engineers, plus sponsors and guests.

The format for the competition is a medal round (full handicap) off the white tees in the morning followed by a Stableford round (3/4 handicap) off the yellow tees in the afternoon; Stableford points are deducted from the net medal score to give overall points. The player with the lowest points will be named overall champion.

There have been 15 winners in the championship's 20-year history with Capt S Williams and former WE 'Ticker' Hart bagging two titles, while another former weapon engineer, Rod Teagle, has three wins to his name.

Beyond a top day's golf, it's very much an occasion for engineers to get together – and raise money for charity courtesy of a raffle which this year is supporting the children's hospice Naomi House.

The cost for the day is £60 for non-China Fleet members / £40 for members, including coffee and a bacon roll on arrival, 36 holes of Championship golf, lunch between rounds and a presentation dinner with prize-giving and the charity raffle on completion.

Details for this year's event can be found in RNTM 008-13. Early accommodation booking at China Fleet is also recommended.

A number of places will be reserved for seagoing personnel.

Details from WO1(ET(WE)) John 'Taff' Reha, john.reha831@mod.uk / jreha@sky.com; 02392 724645 / 9380 24645, or see www.engineersopen.net.



Raising the bar again

FOUR of the best powerlifters in the RN were invited to compete against the best of the UK in the British Drug Free Powerlifting Association national championships.

More than 120 athletes converged on Stafford University to take part in three lifting disciplines – squat, bench press and deadlift – with the aim being to reach a final maximum lift to contribute to an overall total, *writes LMA Chris Martin.*

In the ladies' under 80kg category Lt Rachel Cunningham smashed the competition with a personal best: 117.5kg squat, 62.5kg on the bench press and 145kg deadlift for a 325kg total, setting new European records in all three disciplines. Her deadlift was an MPF (military, police, fire brigade) world record. Rachel also became British 80kg champion in the process – a fantastic start for the RN team.

In the 82.5kg class were AET Reece Meakin and Mne Sam Dew.

Reece – *pictured above* – was making his British championship debut. He put in an enormous effort with a 205kg squat, 150kg bench press and a deadlift of 247.5kg to win the junior category – setting British junior records in

the bench press and deadlift in the process. He also took second place in the 82.5kg category overall.

"The competition couldn't have been more tense – the fight for first place literally came down to the very last lift," said Reece, who only took up the sport a little over a year ago.

"It is such an amazing feeling to become the British U23 Champion and to represent the Royal Navy at British level. All the preparation, dieting and hours spent in the gym have finally paid off."

Representing the Corps was the incredibly-powerful Sam, the 2011 World Champion at 75kg. He moved up in weight and looks certain to dominate the 82.5kg class for the foreseeable future.

His squat, an immense 230kg, was an MPF world record. A Herculean 160kg bench press followed, then a 230kg deadlift for a 620kg total – a new British record as he became British 82.5kg champion in the process.

Moving up to the 100kg class was LMA Chris Martin. Chris managed a 200kg squat, a personal best of 147.5kg on the bench press, but was disappointed to only pull 235kg for the deadlift.

"It's always a great honour to

get the chance to represent both my unit, HMS Vigilant, and the Royal Navy. It didn't go quite as planned this time but I'll be back," he said.

Having become British champions Rachel, Reece and Sam all qualify for the World Championships in Glasgow in November, with Rachel announced as the best female MPF lifter of the competition.

The lifters also host various 'grass roots' events to encourage interest in this growing RN sport, the most recent of which was a 'push-pull' event at RNAS Yeovilton attended by ten athletes from complete first timers up to European champions.

To prove that lifting isn't just for boys, novice female entrant AB Amanda Mancey took to the platform and won the female trophy, lifting a total of 115kg, and setting a new record for her weight class in the bench press.

The male prize, unsurprisingly, was snaffled by Reece Meakin while best newcomer was Mne Kenny Cardwell with an impressive 345kg total.

The next competition is the RN Full Power Championships in Portsmouth's Sail Loft Gym on Wednesday June 26 at 9am.



Harbour tour de force

THIS year's Royal Navy Sailing Association (Portsmouth) Fleet Commander's Cup took place in Portsmouth Harbour on a gloriously sunny May 1.

The cup is a two-boat team race, and this year attracted a total of 68 sailors split into 17 teams in 34 Bosun dinghies.

Teams from the Surface Flotilla (HMS Lancaster, HMS Dauntless, HMS Daring), Navy Command, London and Southampton URNUs, HMS Collingwood and HMS Sultan were represented.

After a slight delay to allow for ferry movements the race began mid-afternoon, with a patchy breeze from the north-east.

The rare sight of so many Bosun dinghies jockeying for position on the start line was a spectacle to be enjoyed, with the course taking the flotilla from Leach Building, past the dockyard and North Corner (where one boat from each team was allowed to deploy spinnakers), then back up towards Portchester Lake.

With a stronger breeze evident in the later stages of the race, spinnaker boats pressed home their advantage and large leads from the previous beats were quickly reduced; in the final stages of the race lead boats dropped up to three places each. The boats crossed the finish line in front of Leach Building in just under an hour and a half of thoroughly-enjoyable sailing.

Ultimately the event was won by the Navy Command RP team of Cdr Ian Jackson, Cdr Nick Wheeler, Lt Cdr Paul Goldman and Lt Cdr Dave Cummings.

In joint second place were the NCHQ Aviation Team of Cdr Jerry Boddington and Lt Cdr Andy Wood, and the PWO 169 team of Lts John Seddon, Barney Pollock, Will Blackett and Dave Morris.

RNSA(P) would like to thank the race officer Ken Bichard for running the race, and Lee Bichard for organising the safety boat crews and the laying of the marks for the course, and to CPO Dave Sargent for organising the event.

More information about forthcoming sailing events, including information on joining the RNSA, can be found at www.rnsa.net.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum, FRPU East

Lusty runs around the Liffey in a jiffy

SAILORS from HMS Illustrious went on a run ashore with a difference in Dublin: no Guinness.

A team of over twenty **runners** from the helicopter carrier competed in the Dublin 10km night race when Lusty spent a weekend in the Irish capital.

The event was organised in support of Tourism Ireland and took competitors on a circuit of Dublin, incorporating many of the landmarks along the Liffey including the Guinness factory.

In all, 5,702 runners took part in the run. The first male runner across the line finished in 30m 29s, followed by the leading woman on 34m 47s.

Surg Lt Cdr Simon Kershaw-Yates posted the fastest Lusty time, 39m 50s, while CPO(MT) Claire McLennan was the fastest Illustrious female on 48m 38s.

"I was really impressed with the number of runners we fielded and there were some very credible individual performances," said Cdr John Voyce, one of Illustrious' veteran runners.

"We were delighted to have the opportunity to compete in this great event. With around 200 calories in a pint of Guinness, maybe we can learn a lot from Irish training methods."

Another tennis triumph

Continued from page 48

This fantastic RN victory could not have been timed better, coinciding with the re-opening of the indoor centre in Burnaby Road, Portsmouth.

Having started training in earnest for this event in late 2012, the RN's indoor facility has been critical to team preparations. The squad assembled there each month for training led by Kevin Baker, who is also the Portsmouth Tennis Academy's director and head coach, and who will be managing the indoor centre for the RNLTA from now on.

In the view of the team captain/manager Cdr Nigel Bowen, it's the combination of a fiercely-

competitive approach generated in training, plus the 'all of one company' spirit that exists among squad members – whether selected to play or not – which has been critical to a succession of Inter-Service tournament victories (six out of nine) for RN team over the past four years.

With vastly improved facilities and dominance of Inter Service tennis, there is a hugely positive feel to Navy tennis – this can only be served by continued and increased participation and the ongoing search for new players. If you are interested, call the indoor tennis centre (02392 730082/830736) or visit <https://pdeportal.co.uk/sports/tennis>.



'We are on our way to Wembley'

TWO weeks after winning the United Services Football League, Portsmouth Naval Base football team were in winning form again, this time in the FA Fives competition.

The Naval Base arrived at Goals in Portsmouth full of confidence in progressing through the regional finals. Such confidence proved justified as they comfortably made it through the league stages, convincingly beating the RM Band in the semi-final before overcoming HMS Sultan in what turned out to be a classic final with everything expected, except goals. That meant a dreaded penalty shoot-out and it was the Naval Base who held their nerve with POPT Matt Shortt not only scoring a penalty but pulling off the match-winning save.

On arrival at the Power League Centre in Basingstoke, the players were relaxed and confident with a strong belief that they could make history by being the first RN team to reach the FA Fives national finals at Wembley.

After scoring 40 goals in six games, history was made.

Having put the FA Fives Staff to the sword, HMNB then took on their next opponents and carried on where they left off, playing one-touch football and scoring some early goals.

This allowed the NB to utilise their eight-man squad, rotating players regularly to great effect.

They ran out convincing winners 6-2 in their second league game which all but secured their place in the quarter finals.

In their final league match, against Bayer Neverloosen, the NB players took their foot off the gas and a shock was on the cards against a team third in the league.

This served as the NB's wake-up call and they never looked back after equalising, running out 5-2 winners to top their group with a guaranteed place in the quarter finals, where they were drawn against Solent Flyers.

For the second game running the NB did not get off to the best start, they found themselves 2-0 down inside four minutes – and staring at elimination.

This changed after some tactical substitutions and some 'digging deep'. The base managed to peg the score back to 2-2.

It looked as if the NB had turned the tie around, but almost immediately from kick-off, Solent Flyers re-took the lead with only one minute remaining.

This looked like the end of the road for the Portsmouth team until LPT Sanderson popped up with two goals in 30 seconds to put them through to the semis.

The draw pitted the Pompey lads against one of their league rivals – and ironically the team they struggled against, Bayer Neverloosen.

As it was, HMNB Portsmouth ran out comfortable 4-0 winners and the sailors were on their way to Wembley later this year as one of the top 12 Fives teams in the land.

There was still, however, the final to decide the winners of the South East contest. The Naval Base hit the ground running against Red Star Spartans, scoring from the kick-off. This put their opponents on the back foot – and they never recovered.

The goals kept coming – a 5-1 triumph when the whistle blew. A great day was encapsulated by a 'last-kick-of-the-game' penalty save' from POPT Shortt.



● The Royal Navy form a guard of honour for the victorious soldiers at the end of the Twickenham clash (and, no, you'd never get away with a haircut like that in the Mob...)

Picture: Graham Harrison

A game of two halves

IN BRIGHT sunshine – and in front of the highest recorded crowd for an amateur fixture at Twickenham (some 72,000 spectators) – the RN locked horns once again with the Army.

And once again, the boys in red triumphed. But for the first 50 minutes, the 1st XV held their own in the annual Inter-Service rugby union decider. And in the opening quarter, the sailors and Royal Marines had the soldiers on the ropes.

With a strong team quickly making its mark, some great work by the RN backs allowed Mne Jon Marlin (42 Cdo) to make a good line break against the Army defence and give ET(ME) Dale Sleeman (Raleigh) the opportunity to score the first try of the match with eight minutes on the clock.

Within a further five minutes, a strong drive from the Navy lineout led to Sgt Gaz Evans (President) scoring the second, converted by Culdrose's POAET Dave Pascoe (earning his 30th cap) for a 12-0 lead.

An Army scrum pressured by the Navy back row led to a box kick from Pascoe, followed up by Mne Jack Foster (40 Cdo) driving the Army into touch, giving the RN a lineout on the Army ten-metre line.

Some fabulous rugby followed, resulting in a second try for Sleeman after some fantastic team work by his centre partner Mne Matt Tichias (42 Cdo), to put the Senior Service into a 19-0 lead after only 18 minutes.

Initially slow to respond, the Army started to gain ground, maintaining constant pressure on the RN five-metre line. By the break, the Army had drawn level at 19 each.

Despite the half-time break, the impetus never really left the Army now. Five minutes into the second period, an RN penalty for

offside gave the Army the opportunity to take the lead for the first time in the game, 22-19.

The Army maintained both the pressure and the pace for the rest of the second half, giving LBdr Sam Speight the opportunity for another try as the game entered the last quarter for a 29-19 lead.

From a pile-up on the Navy line, the Army burrowed underneath to score, taking the score to 36-19 with 12 minutes still on the clock.

The Army managed one more try and conversion before some cracking play from the Navy set Foster up to score the last try of the match, converted by Pascoe in the dying minutes of the game, to give a final score of 43-26 to the Army.

The Chairman of the RFU – England (and *Question of Sport* legend) Bill Beaumont – said that it had been a thrilling match, fantastic crowd and only one streaker at half time (which apparently didn't count) – so overall a great day. The Babcock 'Man of the Match' trophy was awarded to Army SSgt Darren Ball.

The RNRU Award for 'Proud Heritage, Exciting Future 2013' was awarded to Mne Josh Terry (RM Poole) as breakthrough player of the year, whilst the Cossack Sword, which is awarded at the end of each season for ground gained/held (voted as the players' player) was presented to Mne Dom Taylor (42 Cdo RM) for 2013.

Defeat on Twickenham's hallowed turf brought the curtain down on an exciting day's rugby – and one in which all three RN representative sides lost to Army opposition sadly.

Kneller Hall was the setting for both the RN women and the Mariners (veterans) clashes.

First up the ladies. Performing well in the scrum, the RN kept the Army back in their 22 for much of the first half, but despite this, Cpl Amy Robinson (AGC) managed to break through resulting in a try for the Army early in

the first half.

The Navy fought back, gaining a penalty and a try from a scrum within the Army 22 thanks to LAET Pam Williams (702 NAS) which brought them level with the soldiers just before the break only for the Army to break away and bag a try for a 10-5 lead at half time.

The Army continued to push hard at the beginning of the second period and very quickly took control of the match. A late try by LLogs Helen Ing (Nelson), converted by AB Sam Alderson (Scott) gave the sailors their second try of the match – the first time that the women have scored twice against the Army at Kneller Hall.

Despite a continued strong defence by the RN, the Army managed to break through the back row eventually winning the match with a final score of 54-12.

Meanwhile on the adjacent pitch, the RN Mariners were also putting up a strong defence against the Army Masters. After a missed Army penalty 20 minutes into the first half, some good attacking play by the soldiers resulted in the first try of the game, giving the Army a 5-0 lead.

A fast run down the right wing saw a second to give the troops a 10-0 lead at half time.

Within ten minutes of the re-start, the RN took control of play with AB Manoa Satala (RM Poole) scoring a try and conversion to peg the Army back to 10-7.

The soldiers pushed hard on the Mariners' line, but a good defence prevented the Army from scoring another try, despite the RN being down to 13 men.

Unfortunately with fewer men and the Army maintaining continued pressure, they eventually scored a third try to bring the score to 15-7. The final try of the game, including a conversion, brought the final score to 22-7 in the Army's favour.

Scilly season again

ROWERS from Raleigh, Culdrose and Dartmouth took to the challenging waters of the Scilly Isles for the annual world gig championships, an event which draws competitors from across the globe.

Just shy of 140 crews took part in this, the 24th event, held in open water off St Mary's Quay over a course of about 1.6 miles.

BRNC took to the water in the Britannia Association-sponsored gig Leander, the event proved very different from more recent competition in their more familiar river territory.

Leander finished in the same group as HMS Raleigh and one group behind another Royal Navy team from RNAS Culdrose.

Raleigh, regular competitors in the championship, took their Cornish gig Jupiter (pictured below) to the event. Both the men's and women's teams posted times inside the top 100.

"Four of the crew had not competed before, so for a novice crew in such rough conditions, this was an excellent result," said Raleigh's CPO Carol Strong.

"The men's team also did really well considering that they had limited time to train as a full crew."

BRNC's cox Lt Laura Fowle had a particularly tough weekend as she coxed the college team and rowed for Teignmouth Ladies, who borrowed Leander for the race series over the weekend.

Even the staff chaplain, Andrew Hillier, was pressed into service as he was the first on the water on the Friday evening, rowing in the veterans' race for HMS Raleigh.



Another tennis triumph

THE well-equipped and appointed home of RAF tennis at Halton, Buckinghamshire, played host to the Inter Services B (indoor) tournament.

Fiercely contested as ever, the RN men's team was looking to defend the title won with ease last year (prevailing in all eight of their matches), and held since 2010.

Each Service fielded two singles players and two doubles pairs, and it was clear from the outset that the Army possessed an equally-strong team intent on making the tournament as competitive as possible.

Day one concluded very well for the RN squad, winning all four of their singles matches. The No.1 player, Lt Martin Short (Ocean), comfortably dispatched his RAF opponent 6-0, 7-5.

After a brief period of rest he was back on court. With some excellent pre-season performances behind him, he was able to handle a very different game plan from the Army No.1, winning 6-2, 6-2, demonstrating his superiority from the baseline.

His success was followed by Surg Lt Paul Jones (45 Cdo) who defeated his RAF opponent 6-0, 6-1. His second match (against the Army No.2) was a tighter affair, but Paul managed to secure a 6-4, 6-4 victory thereby ensuring a crucial gap at the end of the day: RN 4, Army 2, RAF 0.

As ever, the tournament cannot be won on the first day; although the RN team had hopes of repeating their 2012 dominance, the Doubles contests on the Sunday served to even the balance.

The No.1 pairing of Short and Lt Chris Sharrott (815 Sqn) enjoyed a comfortable win (6-3, 6-1) against the RAF but were unable to match a very strong Army No.1 pair, losing 3-6, 3-6.

The RN lead in the tournament began to reduce when the No.2 pair, Paul Jones and Lt Cdr Phil Richardson (815 NAS) lost to the RAF (5-7, 5-7) – somewhat of a surprise – and the Army won both matches against the RAF.

This meant that the tournament would be decided by a 'shoot out' in the final match of the day between the RN and the Army second pairings.

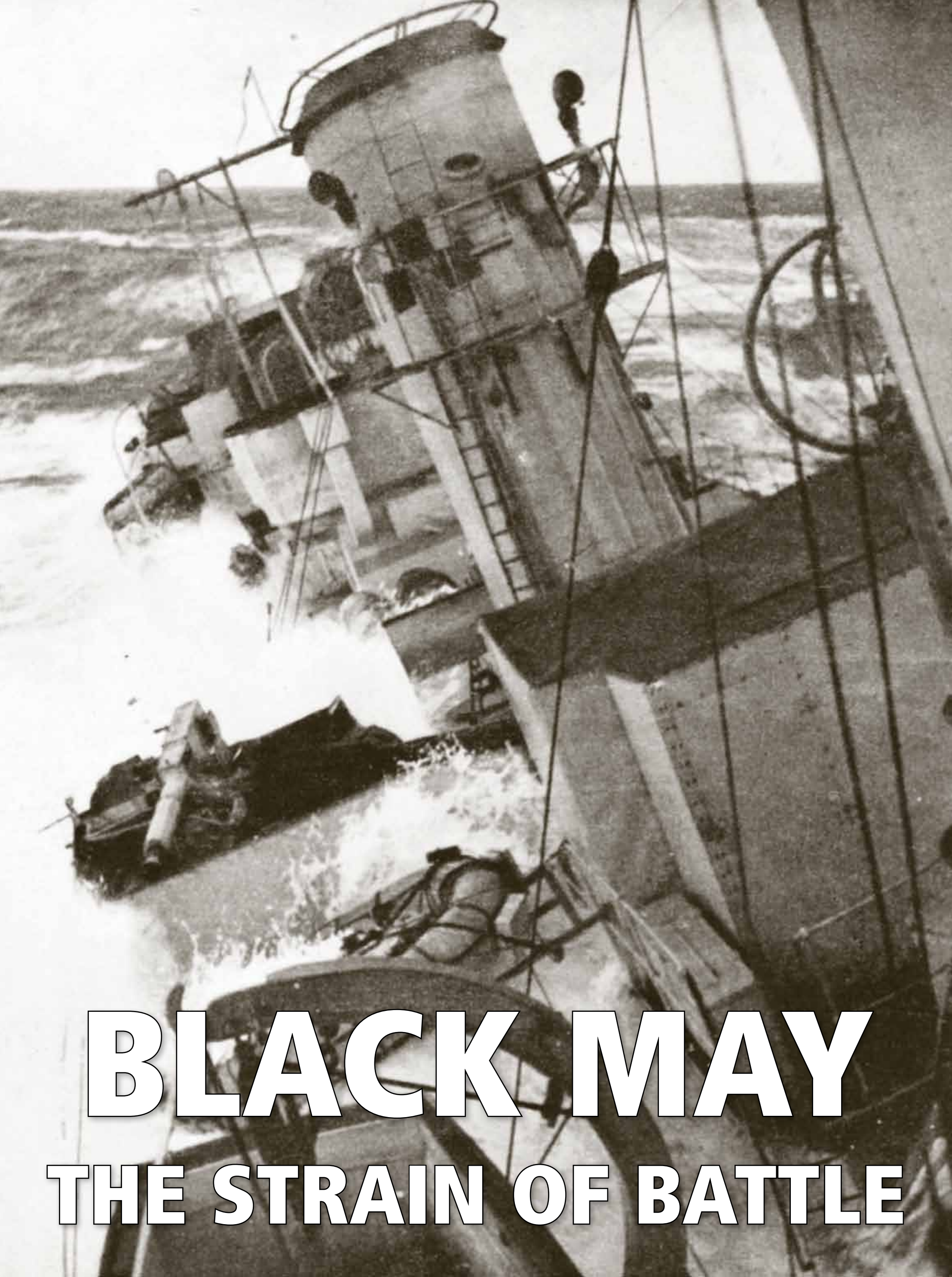
After their first match it seemed that the Army duo were the stronger, but the RN players took the first set 6-4. Encouraged by incredible courtside support, both

pairs put in excellent performances under a great deal of pressure.

In the second set the Army immediately gained the upper hand, breaking the RN serve twice to achieve a 4-0 lead. However showing fantastic grit and determination to get back into the set the RN pair broke back, but the early damage told and the Army won it 6-3, resulting in a final set 'winner takes all' scenario.

Undeterred, Jones and Richardson secured two breaks of serve; with controlled aggression and steady nerves, they eventually prevailed 6-4, prompting huge delight in the RN supporters, among them the new RNLTA President, First Sea Lord Admiral George Zambellas.

Continued on page 47



BLACK MAY

THE STRAIN OF BATTLE



SHIPPING IT GREEN
A Royal Navy destroyer ploughs through a stormy ocean.
Picture: The Navy

'I volunteered for Flowers'

LT ALAN Pierce RNR was originally a Merchant Navy man – but he “volunteered for Flowers”, as he recalled in *Corvette Cracker*, the magazine of the Flower Class Corvette Association.

When war broke out, he was undergoing RNR training and was just “kept on...”

Two busy years of action with HMS Renown saw Lt Pierce eventually in charge of Y Turret of two 15in guns, “but I felt that was no job for a Merchant Navy man.”

With the Flowers beginning to appear in Gibraltar, he asked to leave Renown and volunteered for service in corvettes.

“I did the ‘hunting course’ at HMS Nimrod at Campbeltown in Scotland and went home to Hampshire on leave,” said Lt Pierce.

“The phone rang. I was to go to Liverpool immediately but they would not tell me what my job would be. I was to report to Captain D in the morning and he would explain all.

“At Bootle Captain D professed to know nothing about me and had no job for me, but by early afternoon everyone was searching for me and I reported once more to Captain D, where everything was explained.

“Apparently an officer was being court-martialled. If he was found ‘not guilty’ I hadn’t got a job, but if he was found ‘guilty’ I had a job.

“He was found guilty and the interview went like this:

“Capt D: ‘Have you ever been in a corvette?’

Me: ‘No.’

Capt D: ‘Good. Get down to Begonia right away, take over command. You are sailing at six in the morning.’

“So I was thrown in at the deep end. We sailed at 6am and by the time we got to the Bar Lightship I was seasick. Corvettes behaved very differently from Renown.

“Shortly after I joined Begonia, the very first radar sets were fitted. This was wonderful for station-keeping on dark, rainy, moonless nights.

“Being junior, I was generally ‘Tail-end Charlie’ and all night long the radar operator reported ‘Convoy dead ahead 2,000 yards.’

“Come the dawn there was nothing in sight, but the radar operator was still reporting ‘Convoy ahead, 2,000 yards’. It is very embarrassing to lose the convoy you are supposed to be escorting.”

After about six months, in the spring of 1942, Begonia became the USS Impulse, so Lt Pierce was home on leave again without a job.

“The phone rang. I was to go to Tobermory immediately and take command of Godetia. Just before he rang off he said: ‘Oh, by the way, she has a Belgian crew.’

“She was a new corvette, working up, and the original CO could not get on with his Belgian crew so ‘Monkey’ Stephenson had him removed. They hoped I would do better.

“I got on well with the Belgians. It was a mixed crew, half Walloons and half Flemish, but all orders were given in English.

“We flew two ensigns – the White Ensign and the Belgian flag side-by-side on a specially-constructed ensign staff.

“We had a big send-off on our maiden voyage from Liverpool with

much publicity – the first Belgian warship and so on.

“CinC Western Approaches impressed on me how important it was that we made a success of this – anything I wanted I had but to ask.

“And so we sailed and did not return to the UK for a year. America had just entered the war and the whole of B5 group was transferred to the American side of the Atlantic to show them how to run convoys.

“We had a very interesting year based partly in the Caribbean. On the way home we were with the disastrous TM1 convoy from Trinidad to Gibraltar, where we lost seven tankers out of the nine we started with.

“After a year away all our radars were not working as we could not get spares for British radars in America.

“When we reached Liverpool I handed over to my First Lieutenant and Godetia became entirely Belgian.

“My next corvette was Spiraea and we were on slow convoys to Freetown. One particularly noisy night crossing the Bay of Biscay an ammunition ship was torpedoed and exploded violently.

“I was astern of the convoy; it was a dark night and I heard someone shouting in the water. I was able to steer Spiraea towards his shouts and he scrambled aboard unharmed.

“I asked him what ship he was on and what side she was torpedoed.

He said his ship was not torpedoed. He was on look-out on the fo’c’sle head on his ship when the ammunition ship exploded and he was blown overboard. He was a very lucky man to be picked up.

“I also found a lifeboat with 12 people on it. They were from the Baharistan and said they were torpedoed on the starboard side, but when I caught up with the convoy in the morning the Baharistan was still with the convoy, completely unharmed.

“They had done the impossible – launched their lifeboat with the ship doing full speed. The captain was delighted to get his 12 crew back. He thought he had lost them for good.”

Crowded, uncomfortable and very, very wet – life

‘Not a place for t

IN 1941, Leading Seaman Jim Reed had served in the Royal Navy for four years, first in the one-time flagship at Jutland, battleship HMS Iron Duke, then with cruiser HMS Glasgow.

His draft to 24-year-old V and W-class destroyer HMS Vanoc – named for one of King Arthur’s knights – was “a mental shock”.

“She was laid alongside a jetty with several more destroyers. All these ships wore the look that showed they had endured the worst the sea could offer,” he said.

Vanoc served in the disastrous Norwegian campaign, helped with the evacuation of British troops from St Nazaire as France fell and, from the summer of 1940, had joined the

Western Approaches Command in Liverpool for convoy escort duties.

She had done well.

In March 1941 she rammed and sank U100 – killing U-boat ace Joachim Schepke in the process – and helped HMS Walker in ending the career of another of Germany’s top submariners, Otto Kretschmer, in U99.

In his book *Convoy ‘Maniac’ RBI* Jim gives a detailed and fascinating glimpse into life below decks in a convoy escort – and it was clearly not a place for the faint-hearted:

“Everywhere was cramped and made compact. There were no lockers to hang up and store clothes, but compartments under the mess deck seats nearest the ship’s side which had to be shared by all those within the mess.

“Hammocks were stored and packed vertically in netting to save

space. Metal rails and hooks were part of the fittings to sling your hammock in your mess or flat.

“But these positions had their regular established users and there were far too few for everyone to be able to sling a hammock, so those others had to sleep on the mess tables, mess seating and on the decks.

“In the two years and more I served on the V & Ws the only times I could sling a hammock was if some of the crew were on overnight leave.

“The other times I either sat hunched up or on the deck, and many sailors were in the same position as myself.

“Hammocks that were slung were so tight together that they moved and rolled as one unit.

“During convoy duties those men coming off watch would take off their duffel coats, oilskins, rubber

boots, scarves, balaclava, etc and turn in fully-dressed.

“There were very few, if any, times that normal clothing could be removed, and for those sleeping rough practically all clothes stayed put.

“There were no facilities to dry clothing. There was little or no shelter on the upper decks, the bridge was open to the elements, so bridge personnel, gunners, depth charge and torpedo tube crews, and others stood a very high chance of being soaked continuously from the treacherous sea.

“After changing watches the outside clothing was hung up to dry but was invariably just as wet when required for the next watch.

“The chief stoker allowed some clothes lines to be strung where safe in the boiler room, to assist drying out, but it was not enough when the

WILD FLOWER

HMS Orchis in heavy seas.
Picture: Corvette Cracker



Trials and tribulations at Tobermory forged fighting fleet

A Monkey on their back

MONKEY. The Terror of Tobermory. Vice Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson elicited a mixture of fear and respect from those who trained under him for escort and anti-submarine duty in the Atlantic.

John Sorotos recalled, in *Corvette Cracker*, a couple of meetings with Monkey:

“After commissioning HMS Coltsfoot, a Flower-class corvette, at Aberdeen and storing/fuelling the ship at Greenock – or was it Gourcock? – we proceeded to Tobermory. Few, if any, of us knew what to expect or what lay in store.

“We picked our way through the Sound of Mull and, as we arrived in a crowded harbour, it was growing dark with the October/November

weather, wet and windy.

“Steel wire ropes were lowered to be secured to both the fore and aft buoys, but the wind caught the ship and the captain, a youngish recently-retired Lieutenant (E) RN, ordered an astern movement resulting in 17 turns of wire rope round the prop!

“Calamity – and we spent several hours swinging round the buoy by the stern. Not very seamanlike.

“Eventually, though, the bow was secured to the fore and buoy.

“During the first watch, when all except the quartermaster (a very green OD – me) had retired below decks to eat and warm up, a powerful motorboat screamed to a halt below the gangway, whereupon a diminutive man, covered in gold braid and medal

ribbons, leapt from his barge and alighted on the ship’s deck beside the confused quartermaster.

“‘Abandon ship!’ screamed the admiral, and as I am sure most readers will realise, the youthful quartermaster who was at sea for the first time did not know what to say or do.

“More confusion but, of course, Vice Admiral Sir Gilbert (‘Monkey’) Stephenson knew what to do when he jumped fully clothed into the sea.

“The barge crew also knew what to do because the survivor was picked up very promptly and they sped off to the flagship, Western Isles.

“Next morning, soon after first light, and without the benefit of wetsuit – no such thing in those days – the captain went over the stern into what must have been very cold water and spent the next few hours laboriously and with little help or sympathy freeing the ship.

“As a result, Coltsfoot had lost/missed a whole night and day of evolutions, or certainly those intended originally.

“The captain and unsympathetic ship’s company soon found out the penalties for cocking things up.

“On another occasion, by which time the author had risen from a green OD to a frightened sub lieutenant RNVR, HMS Foxtrot – laughingly a member of the so-called Dance-class of Admiralty trawler, arrived at Tobermory for working-up.

“The ship’s company, including four officers, was 48 and so, if it were possible, the experience was felt even more keenly and personally than when serving in a Flower-class corvette.

“After spending a long day at sea simulating anti-submarine depth charge attacks, we returned to Tobermory at about 1730 to be greeted by the news that every ship in the fleet was to lower a boat and provide an officers’ boat crew which was required to pull round – ie,

outside the fleet.

“What a surprise that it was again a cold, dark, rainy and windy night, with a boat too heavy and unwieldy for a crew of only four officers.

“There did not seem a lot to choose between the permutation of three pulling and one on the tiller or four rowing and no one at the helm.

“Slow, crab-like and zig-zag movements prevailed but somehow Foxtrot’s officers’ boat’s crew got round most of the course until, in what we believed was total obscurity, we ‘ducked’ inside the last ship before returning to ours.

“The bosun and his team prepared to hoist the boat whilst its crew made for the heads and the wardroom for supper. Not surprisingly we were starving.

“The first mouthfuls were being swallowed when the bunting tosser appeared in the doorway and handed Baldie (John Bald, our captain – actually a recently-promoted Lieutenant RNVR) a signal saying that because we had failed to complete the course properly, Foxtrot’s officers’ boat’s crew was required to pull round the fleet again.

“So we did, and when we returned to the ship, exhausted, at about 2200, another signal awaited.

“Foxtrot was required to sail immediately for a night shoot.

“As we passed some of the other ships on our way out of the harbour, the hailed comments were, to everyone except Foxtrot, a great laugh.

“I do not have the slightest doubt that the discipline we all learned was a major factor in winning the Battle of the Atlantic.

“At a dinner some 20 years later, my wife was sitting next to Monkey.

He said: ‘I couldn’t be kind to them, my dear – the Germans weren’t going to be kind to them.

‘I knew that, but they did not!’ How right he was.



BOMBS AWAY
Royal Navy sailors prepare to drop a depth charge.
Picture: Corvette Cracker

...on board an Atlantic escort destroyer

'The faint-hearted'

weather was at its most severe.

"As mentioned, other clothing was rarely removed or washed until the ships returned for fuelling, stores, provisions and so on, and even then, if the boilers had to be blown down for cleaning, it was a case of using any dockyard washing and toilet facilities."

Food was not a straightforward matter. If you had an appetite in the heaving, churning mid-Atlantic, the menu might not have been to your taste...

"It was no problem to eat the food if you had a cast iron stomach, but most of the crews, who were only normal, were affected by the terrible weather at times, the violent rolling, tossing and turning of the ship, one moment riding the top of the waves and the next plunging down into a deep trough with a great crash and an unimaginable shudder throughout the whole structure," said Jim.

"These conditions could last for days and weeks, especially during the long winters in the North Atlantic and Arctic.

"It was surprising how even the men who were unfortunately always prone to sea-sickness could quickly recover their stability and appetite once the weather subsided.

"In general the men's meals consisted of:

Breakfast – mug of tea and a fag or your purchase from the canteen;

Dinner – big eats;

Tea-time – mug of tea, bread if available, possibly something from the canteen;

Supper – mug of tea and two fags, anything you could scrounge."

Although foul weather generally protected convoys from U-boat attacks, the misery and sheer fatigue of trying to live and work in a



PATROL'S END
A doomed U-boat in the Atlantic
Picture: The Navy

tiny warship in a storm was a grim prospect.

"The old V & Ws behaved like rampant bulls in a raging temper," said Jim.

"The movement of these ships in bad weather was fearful.

"The shape of the bows caused the ship to barge her way through heavy seas instead of riding the waves, causing vast amounts of water to come over the bow and upper decks.

"The ships were virtually out of sight until they struggled clear again.

"If the weather became unbearable and the safety of the ship was threatened, speed had to be reduced, hove to or making steerage way only.

"When pitching heavily every nerve of the ship shuddered, forward gun mountings could be partly

un-shipped, ASDIC domes broken off and these ships developed corrugated bottoms with the continuous poundings.

"There was rarely a time at sea when these ships were comfortable, and they remained frisky in even fair conditions.

"Once at sea, wire hawsers were fitted each side of the main deck from forward to aft, about six feet high.

"Short lengths of rope with metal thimbles could run up and down these safety lifelines.

"Men who had to travel either way for changing shifts and so on, would grasp a line with both hands, watch what the sea was doing and if he considered the waves were not going to wash over, run like hell and pull up

his legs when the water was washing over, get a good bashing and finish up a nervous wreck at his destination.

"Once away there was no turning back half way.

"In severe foul conditions, the odds that you would make it home and dry were very high against you and if you were half drowned there was always the consolation that there was someone to have a good laugh at you.

"By brilliant design the ship's stores, food, rum etc. were situated aft and the mess decks forward, also the officers' quarters were aft and the bridge forward so the lifelines had good use.

"I have known men to lose stores on these trips, but never the rum issue; a fate worse than death."

Cook also dab hand at loading weapons

GEOFF Drummond, of Flower-class corvette HMS *Campion*, recalled this account in *Fleet* magazine during the war of a cook on a sister ship who was recognised for his contribution to the effectiveness of the corvette

"A naval cook who worked for as long as 20 hours at a stretch in the intense heat of his galley to feed hundreds of survivors from torpedoed ships, and later carried depth charges on his back during a submarine attack, has been Mentioned in Dispatches.

"He is Leading Cook Robert Henry Samuel Scott RN of the corvette HMS *Petunia*.

"The *Petunia* was in tropical waters when she picked up 248 survivors from lifeboats.

"In order to feed them Scott had to work continuously in heat which was almost unbearable.

"Later another 107 survivors added to his victualling problems.

"During one spell in the galley it

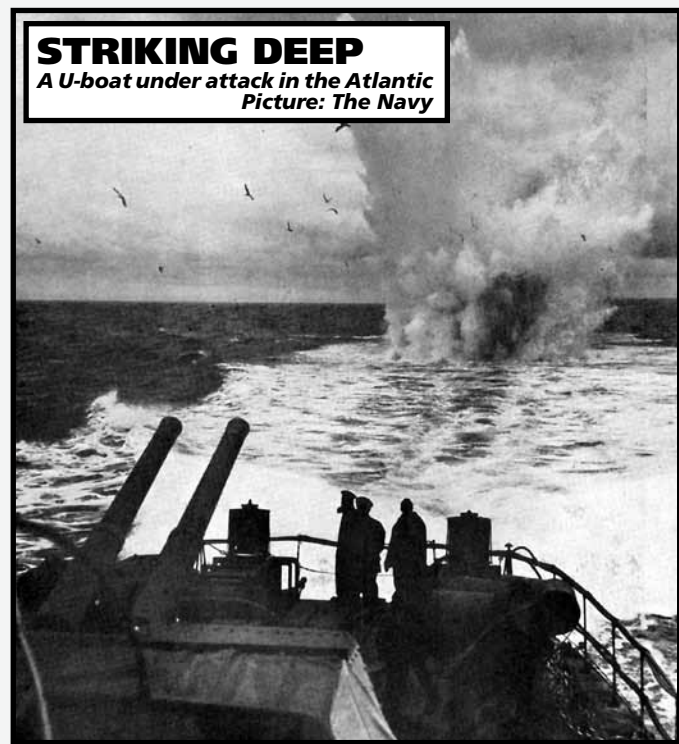
is officially recorded he made more than 900 sausage rolls and 600 bread rolls, in addition to preparing large quantities of soups, vegetables and marmalade tart.

"During the same voyage, when HMS *Petunia* carried out an attack on a U-boat, Scott worked up to his waist in water whilst helping to man a depth-charge thrower.

"A gale was blowing and the depth charge stroke parted.

"Scott knelt on the deck while other crew members heaved the depth charge on his shoulders.

"Then, slowly, he pulled himself up far enough to tip the charge into the thrower stalk, whence they were fired overboard."



STRIKING DEEP
A U-boat under attack in the Atlantic
Picture: The Navy

Avoiding Bismarck

CONVOY escorts had their own life-or-death battles with U-boats, but occasionally they had a walk-on part in the struggles between the leviathans.

Mr H Thomas related, in *Corvette Cracker*, a period on board Flower-class corvette HMS *Verbena*:

"It is Saturday May 17 1941.

"We arrive at Hvalfjörður in Iceland and go alongside the tanker to oil ship.

"We complete and leave for Reykjavik in order to pick up stores, load depth charges and hopefully there will be some mail waiting for us.

"We sail again at 1900 hours to join outbound convoy, to our dismay as we had hoped for a couple of days' rest.

"On May 20 we meet the escort with only one ship – the convoy had been dispersed.

"Reports are coming in of ships being torpedoed 31.30 degrees West, 59 degrees North.

"Our radio operators are receiving SOS calls continually, there are

reports of eight ships torpedoed out of 39.

"One tanker is called the San Felix; the radio operator was a friend of mine.

"In the First World War he went down with his ship while sending out an SOS, but somehow survived.

"I was steering *Verbena* on this occasion and could not help hearing the signals being decoded. We are very busy.

"This is May 21. At 0300 hours there is a flash of light ahead of us.

"Captain D in the destroyer HMS *Malcolm* is picking up survivors from a tanker on fire in her starboard after tank.

"It is dying down and Captain D signaled us to tow her to Iceland. She is called the *Elusa*.

"Our position at this time is 160 miles from Cape Farewell, South East corner of Greenland.

"Now we are four miles from the tanker. I go on deck to get a joint of meat I had hung under the gun platform.

"I look up and see a U-boat breaking surface. I shout up to the bridge and the alarm bells sound off.

"The U-boat has not seen us – he's making for the tanker.

"We open fire with our 4in but fall short – in spite of that it must have given him a hell of a shock.

"He crash dives under the tanker. We steam around the tanker for 24 hours – we drop 42 depth charges at intervals.

"We get a message – the German battleship *Bismarck* and Prinz Eugen are steaming down the Denmark Strait with our battlefleet in pursuit and we are told to get out of the way.

"We hear the Prince of Wales open fire and got some hits on the *Bismarck* and started a fire.

"The *Bismarck* replied and the Prince of Wales was hit.

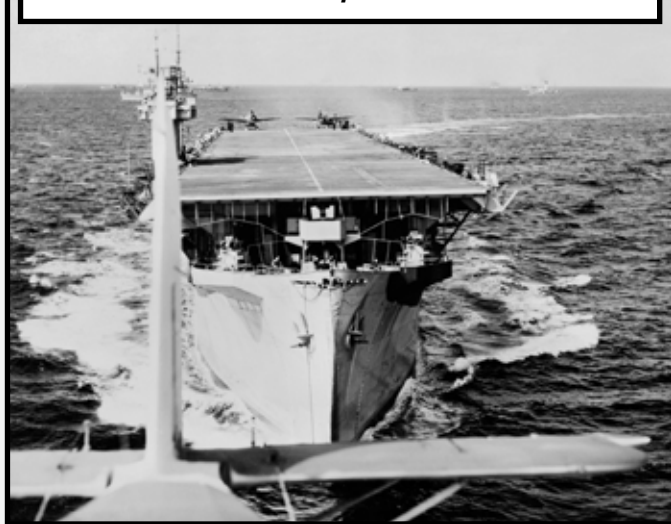
"At 0800 the *Hood* was hit and blew up. We are right in the path of this action and steaming flat out to get clear.

"An anxious time, but we reach Iceland safely."

SHIPS WITH WINGS

A *Swordfish* leaves the deck of escort carrier HMS *Biter* on anti-submarine patrol in March 1944

Picture: Imperial War Museum A22715



BULLET-RIDDLED BODY OF PILOT LIFTED FROM SEA

HARRY Griffin recalled the particular dangers faced by pilots with escort forces, particularly in the months before escort carriers were deployed.

"I joined the destroyer HMS *Highlander* in June 1942, Escort Group Leader B4 under the command of Cdr Day," said Harry.

"In the two-and-a-half years I served on *Highlander* incidents were numerous, humorous and, of course, some sad.

"I refer to the latter on the following recollection.

"As is well-documented and recorded, the first years of the war at sea saw what became known as the 'air gap' mid-Atlantic.

"The Germans exploited this gap with great success with the long-range reconnaissance version of the Focke-Wulf.

"They could pick up a convoy out of range of our fighter cover.

"Their mission was to report back to Berlin – position, course and speed of the convoy, and probably the composition, number of ships, type etc.

"To combat the menace of the Air Gap, the Admiralty brought into service the CAM ship – the Catapult Armed Merchantman.

"A sturdy merchant ship was fitted with a steam catapult on the reinforced bow section, and on this sat a Hurricane or Spitfire, to be fired into action.

"This CAM ship was stationed centre column of the convoy, along with the Commodore and rescue ships.

"When the Focke Wulf was spotted, the pilot was scrambled, fired off the catapult to take on the

invader, and after combat, ejected and hoped to be picked up.

"I now refer to the sad incident.

"We did launch once, and the poor lad lost the battle – the Focke-Wulf was well-armed to defend itself.

"Our rescue crew picked the pilot up; his body was riddled with bullets.

"He had managed to bail out, and I often think he was shot in descent.

"My reason for thinking this way that a fighter pilot was as much a prize as his aircraft.

"There followed his burial at sea – all crew not on watch attended the quarterdeck ceremony to a very brave lad.

"Not long after this the answer to the Air Gap was provided in the shape of the escort carrier, hastily-constructed Liberty Ships with lids on.

"Tracker, Striker, Fencer etc – all aptly named by Jack as 'Woolworth carriers'.

"They were not without mishap. Straight and short flight decks, missed trip wires and overshoots meant early baths."

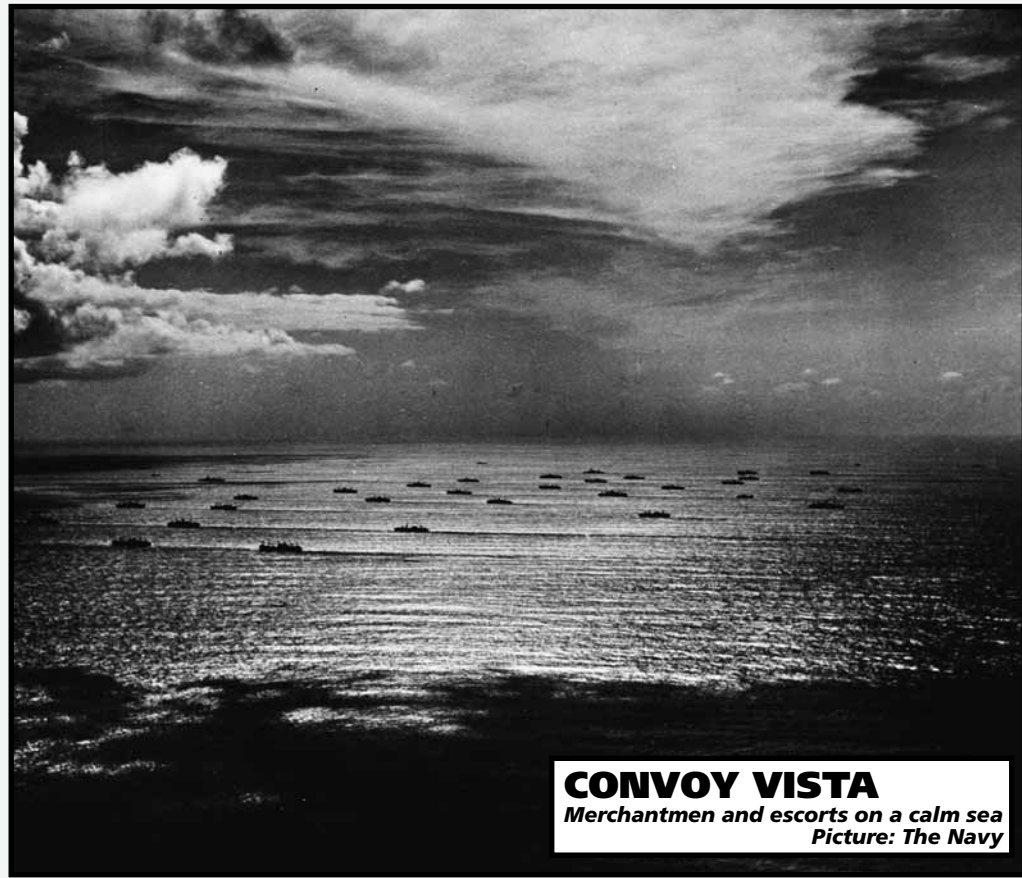
Novel means of escape?

LAUGHTER in the Atlantic one dark night, as reported by Geoff Drummond in *Corvette Cracker*.

"HMS *Primrose* was mistaken for a submarine and was chased by a destroyer in the same group.

Finding herself suddenly illuminated by starshell, *Primrose* signalled her attacker.

"Shall I dive?" she asked..."



CONVOY VISTA

Merchantmen and escorts on a calm sea

Picture: The Navy

INSIDE THE MIND OF ENEMY SUB CHIEF

Each month intelligence chiefs at the Admiralty try to put themselves in the mind of U-boat chief Karl Dönitz.

They trawl through newspaper cuttings, transcripts of radio broadcasts, pore over intercepted radio messages, after-action reports from our ships involved in the fight against German subs and other official reports.

Their aim? To see the war against the U-boat through the eyes of our foe. Here are some key snippets from those fascinating reports.

April 1943

Historians of this war are likely to single out the months of April and May 1943 as the critical period during which strength began to ebb away from the German U-boat offensive, not because of the low figure of shipping sunk which, for the whole world area, did not much exceed a quarter of a million tons; not because of the satisfactorily high number of U-boats sunk, which was again well above the average of the last 12 months; but because, for the first time, U-boats failed to press home attacks on convoys when favourably situated to do so. There is ground for a confident estimate that the enemy's peak effort is passed. Morale and efficiency are delicate and may wither rapidly if no longer nourished by rich success...

The month showed what our counter-measures can achieve against the enemy's most strenuous efforts. Promised developments are coming to fruition... In none of the attacks on trans-Atlantic convoys did the enemy succeed in obtaining anything like the upper hand.

May 1943

May was a very black month for the U-boats. Sinkings of U-boats probably averaged one a day, while losses of merchant shipping were on a much reduced scale...

The decline in efficiency and morale noticed in April was accentuated in May and, though it may be only temporary, it is at least a striking tribute to the weight of the offensive measures concerted so effectively by support groups and very long-range aircraft...

May has been a record month for U-boat sinkings. Those known to have been sunk numbered at least 24, and a probable rate of destruction was at least one a day. Our merchant shipping losses were, moreover, down to under 250,000 tons...

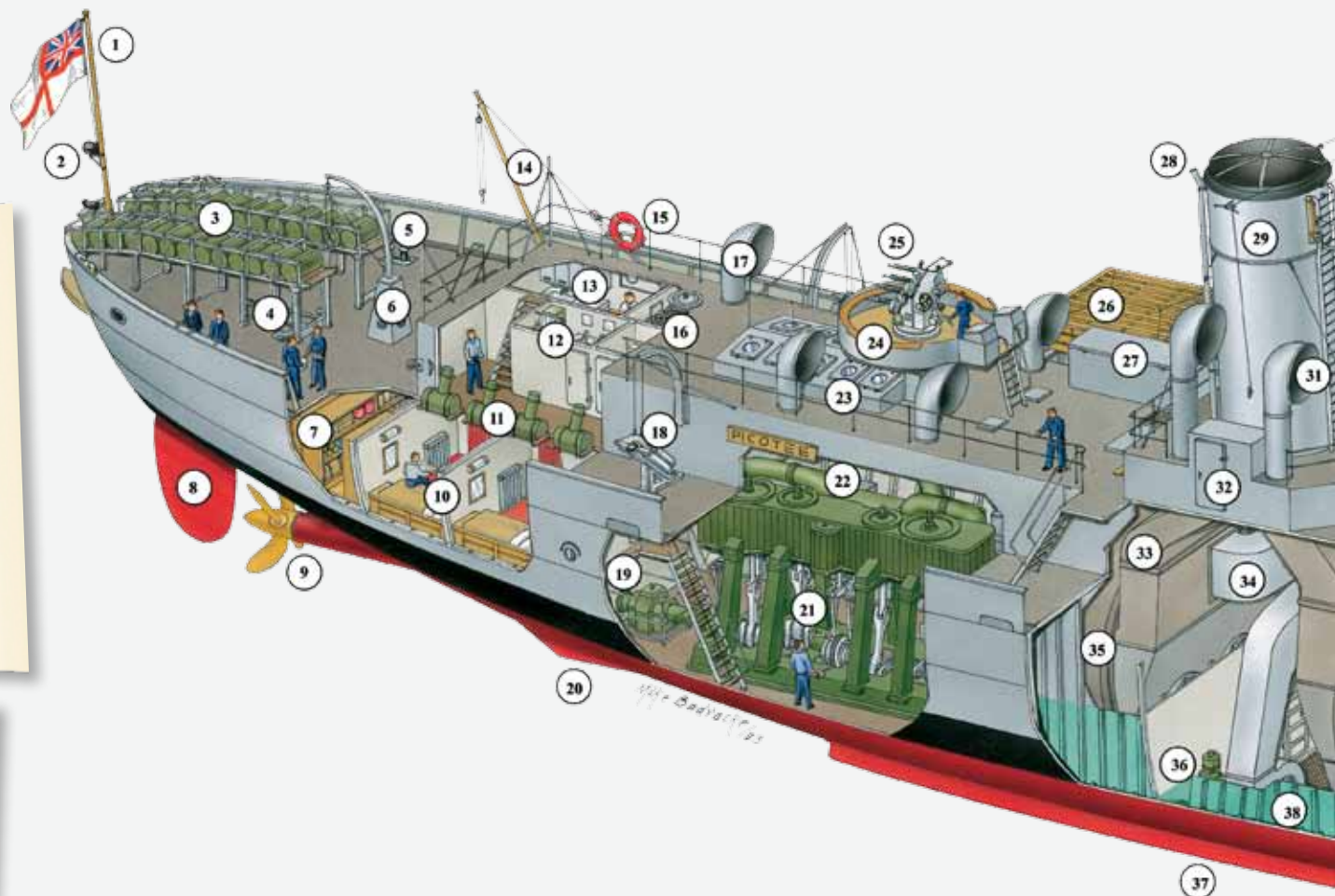
To sum up, it is probable that historians will note that May 1943 was remarkable in the Battle of the Atlantic in that escorts and aircraft defeated, at least temporarily, the pack attacks of U-boats. This was achieved as much by superior leadership and tactics, quick initial action and well co-ordinated attack and defence as by concentration of forces at the decisive points and by weapon superiority...

June 1943

Late in May the enemy accepted the fact of decisive defeat in the spring battle, which he had no doubt hoped might decide the war in the Atlantic in his favour, and retired from the battlefield of the North Atlantic convoy routes...

The story of the month's endeavours can be summed up in the single word 'failure'. Shipping casualties were extraordinarily low...

The defeat of the U-boat is still a first charge on the resources of the United Nations. June was a good month in anti-U-boat warfare, largely because the enemy had retired to lick his wounds and think about the next move. His intermediate move is evidently to attack in many areas and try to cause us to disperse our forces both surface and aircraft. His only hope of ultimate success, however, is effective attack on the North Atlantic lifeline and we may be sure that he will return to this with both new equipment and modified tactics...



Unglamorous, terrible seakeepers, but built in the

Deadly Flowers Safe

"DESTROYERS are all right, of course, but corvettes are the tough babies – and we're in corvettes. Why not be proud?"

Thus opined Nicholas Monsarrat, yachtsman and novelist in *HM Corvette* – an account of life on the North Atlantic run in the first half of World War 2.

Monsarrat – best known for another semi-autobiographical account of the same struggle, *The Cruel Sea* – painted a surprisingly bleak-yet-honest picture of life in corvettes for his wartime audience.

We are the smallest ships that operate regularly in the North Atlantic in winter. We have to keep going in appalling weather – weather that really must be seen to be believed.

After a long and rough trip, when everything in the mess decks – bedding, lockers, spare gear – has been wet through for days, and cooking anything but tea has been out of the question, we may have to oil, store and go out again, all in a matter of hours. We may be closed up at action stations for days on end; certainly we are often never out of our clothes for a fortnight or more at a stretch.

The corvettes Monsarrat was describing were the Flower class – represented here by HMS Picotee – mainstays of the struggle against the U-boat.

They were small – 205ft long, under 1,000 tons – poor sea-keepers, cramped, slower than their foe (on the surface at any rate), but they were also relatively quick and cheap to build... and dockyards produced them by the bucketful.

Indeed just shy of 300 Flowers were built. They would fly the flags of Canada, the US, Belgium, Netherlands, Greece, India, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, even the Third Reich (four being built for the Marine Nationale were seized by the Germans when they overran France). But mostly they flew the White Ensign – 150 ships in all.

With the clouds of war gathering in 1939, the Admiralty looked to bolster

its convoy protection with smallish escorts which could be built quickly at commercial yards around the country.

Smith's Dock Company in Middlesbrough came up with the solution, taking the design of a 700-ton trawler as inspiration. The Admiralty liked it and, five weeks before the outbreak of war, placed its first order. By January 1940, well over 100 of these new corvettes, all named after flora, were being built or on order books.

The Flowers were originally intended to shepherd coastal convoys safely around the British Isles. But their impressive range – 3,500 nautical miles – would suffice to take them from the Old World to the New on Atlantic convoy duties.

And that is the struggle with which they are most associated. They were the workhorses of convoy escort groups from mid-1940 (the first Flower, HMS Gladiolus, entered service in April 1940, not six months after being laid down) and well into 1943, before River-class frigates and Castle-class corvettes (the latter were effectively 'super Flowers') replaced them.

Even though these more capable ships entered the fray in the second half of WW2, the Flowers bore a greater burden in the Battle of the Atlantic than any other class of ship. For every two warships assigned to Atlantic convoy duties, one was a Flower.

Poor seakeepers

Every man who served in a Flower commented on the ships' poor handling. Monsarrat would complain they "would roll on wet grass". Torpedoman Cyril Stephens described HMS Orchis' motion in bad weather as "like a corkscrew".

Australian-born Harold Chesterman served in three Flowers, latterly as Commanding Officer of HMS Snowflake, in which he sank U125 during Black May (see our main feature):

"For the first six weeks you know you haven't a hope in hell of getting over that next wave," he remembered. "And then maybe, after the next six



NO EASY CROSSINGS
HMS Anemone rears up in heavy seas while escorting an Atlantic convoy
Picture: Flower-class Corvette Assn

weeks, you think well, maybe we will, and then after that you know nothing the Atlantic can throw at you will hurt you."

Nicholas Monsarrat never grew accustomed to the way the Atlantic tossed the Flowers around.

"When you drink, the liquid rises toward you and slops over; at meals the food spills off your plate, the cutlery will not stay in place," he wrote.

"Things roll about and bang and slide away crazily – and then come back and hurt you again.

"The wind doesn't howl, it screams at you and tears at your clothes, and throws you against things and drives your breath down your throat again. And off watch, below, there is no peace; only noise, furniture adrift, clothes and boots scuffling about on the deck, a wet and dirty chaos."

But here was the thing. However much the Atlantic tossed a Flower about, a Flower bounced back. Apparently not a single man was lost overboard.

They were, Harold Chesterman recalled 50 years later, "uncomfortable and lively and wet, but safe. It didn't matter what the weather was – we could go anywhere. They were wonderful little ships."

Wonderful – and also hard worked. Up to a fortnight across the Atlantic, a few days leave or 'layover', usually in St John's or Halifax, then a return journey – perhaps a month away at a time.

"Most of the time it was very boring, some of the time it was fairly frightening," John Arthur of HMS Anemone remembered. "And all the time it was very wet."

Sub Lt Roy 'Dick' Dykes hated the night watch aboard HMS Honeysuckle in particular.

"You could find that it unnerves you completely. You might be shaking possibly. It's the only time that I've ever smoked – to calm the nerves.

"If you were hit in the darkness, there was little chance that you'd be picked up. Daytime yes, there was a good chance, but at night, there was no chance."

And hit Flowers were – regularly. Three dozen were lost over the course of the war, more than 20 to U-boats.

Fighting Flowers

But they also hit back. Repeatedly. For they were well equipped to deal with the U-boat menace. To find their foe, Flower-class crews turned

GERMAN PUBLIC WORRIED – OFFICIAL

The tentacles of the Third Reich reach into all aspects of life in Nazi Germany.

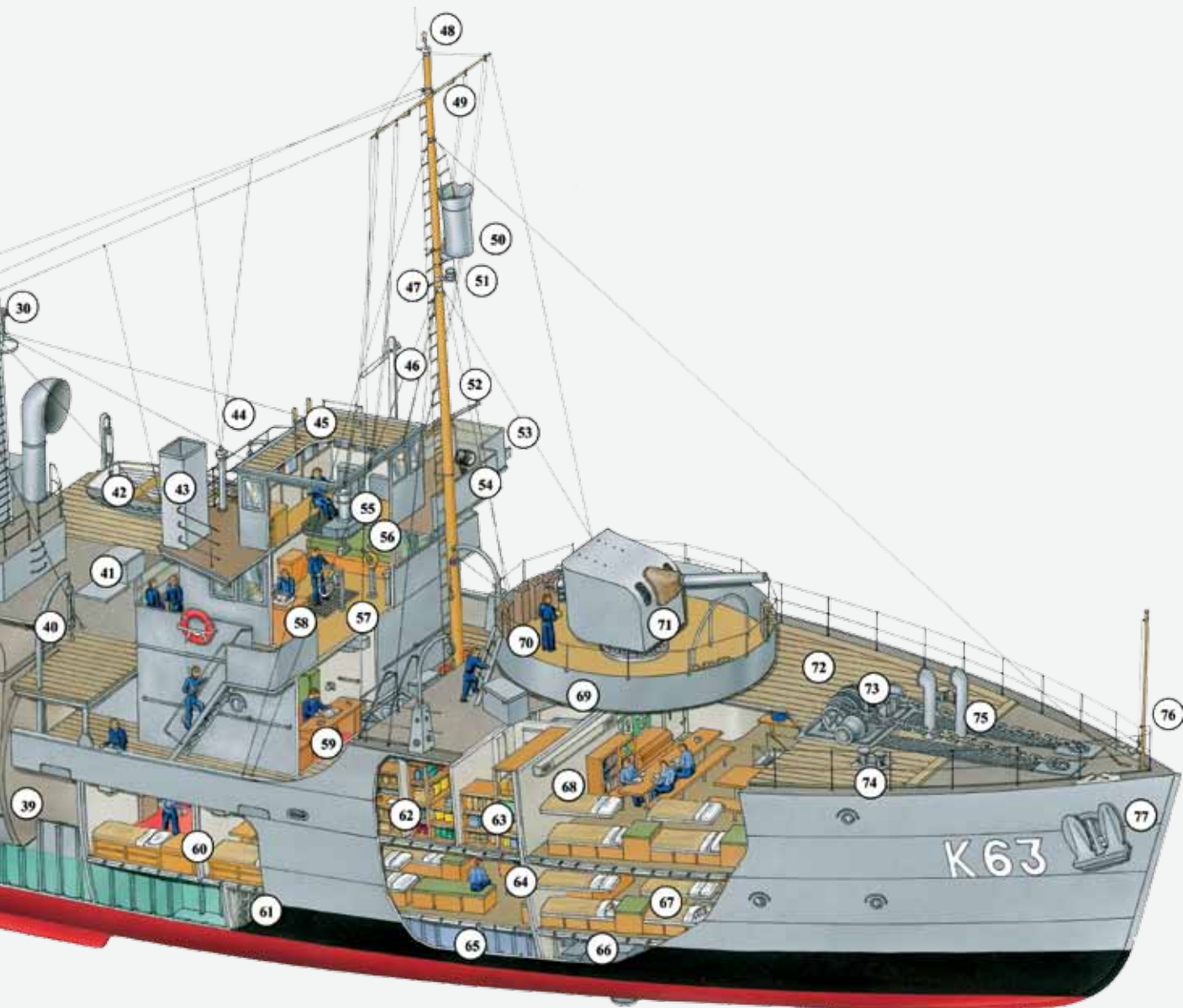
Daily, agents of the Sicherheitsdienst – the Security Service arm of the SS – are eavesdropping on everyday conversations in shops, trams, trains, meeting halls, beerkellers, public squares as they try to assess public morale on a whole range of issues from attitudes to the Nazi leadership to the progress of the war, rationing, and treatment of Jews and foreign labourers. Here are two of the latest reports from the Reich.

May 24 1943

The lack of a U-boat special report for May – "which had become routine" – was discussed in a lively (and worried) fashion by members of the public, who have hitherto viewed the long-term effect of the U-boat campaign as important, if not decisive. Many people assume that our enemies are using a new, very rare defensive weapon.

May 30 1943

In the past few months people have been led to believe that the U-boat would perhaps be decisive for the outcome of the war, but they have been misled – the sinking figures have fallen without any plausible explanation.



Picture: Imperial War Museum A4594

HMS PICOTEE

Commanding Officers

Aug 1940-Aug 12 1941.....Lt Ronald Arthur Harrison, RNR

Facts and Figures

Class: Flower-class Corvette
Pennant Number: K63
Cost: £50,000 (around £2.5m today)
Builder: Harland & Wolff, Belfast
Laid down: March 21, 1940
Launched: July 19, 1940
Commissioned: September 5, 1940
Fate: Sunk with all hands, August 12 1941
Displacement: 925t
Length: 62.5m (205ft)
Beam: 10m (33ft)
Draught: 3.5m (15ft 5in)

Speed: 16kts
Range: 3,500 nautical miles at 12kts
Crew: 66
Propulsion: 2 x fire tube Scotch boilers powering a double-acting triple-expansion reciprocating steam engine generating 2,750HP
Armament: 1 x 4 inch Mk IX gun
2 x Vickers .50 machine guns
2 x .303 inch Lewis machine gun (twin)
2 x Mk II depth charge throwers
2 x depth charge rails with 40 depth charges

Key

1. Ensign staff
2. Sternlight
3. Stern depth charge runways
4. Kedge anchor
5. Aft mooring bollard, port (and starboard)
6. Depth charge davit
7. Store room
8. Rudder
9. Propeller
10. Petty Officers cabins
11. Depth charge deck stowage
12. Petty Officers washroom and toilet
13. Galley
14. Portable derrick, port (and starboard)
15. Lifebelt
16. Galley coal store
17. Engine room vent
18. Lateral depth charge throwers, port and starboard
19. Propeller shaft bearing
20. Keelson
21. Four-cylinder, triple expansion steam engine
22. Steam box and recirculating piping
23. Engine room skylight
24. Aft gun platform
25. Quadruple 0.5-inch machine guns
26. Life raft, Carley float
27. Deck locker
28. Waste steam vent
29. Funnel
30. Whistle and siren
31. Boiler room vents
32. Stokehold entrance, port (and starboard)
33. Boiler exhaust ducts
34. Feed air ducting
35. Aft boiler
36. Forced draught fan, one per boiler
37. Bilge keel, port (and starboard)
38. Fuel oil bunkers, (port and) starboard
39. Forward boiler
40. Starboard boat davit
41. Pyrotechnic stowage box
42. 16-foot dinghy, port (and starboard)
43. Conning tower
44. W/T (wireless telegraphy) aerials and leading trunk
45. Air observation platform
46. Semaphore pole
47. Mast
48. Mast head light and lightning conductor
49. W/T (wireless telegraphy) aerial cable spar and halyards
50. Crows nest
51. Steaming light
52. Lewis gun
53. Port bridge wing and navigation light mounting
54. Signal lamp
55. Compass platform
56. Engine room telegraph
57. Bridge
58. Chart table and locker
59. Commanding officer's cabin
60. Officers' cabins
61. Ammunition magazine
62. Lamp room and paint store
63. Provision store
64. Crew cabins
65. Fresh water tanks
66. ASDIC room
67. Fold-up crew bunks
68. Crew mess
69. Forward gun platform
70. Platform ammunition stowage
71. 4-inch gun
72. Foredeck planking
73. Anchor winch
74. Forward mooring bollards, port and starboard
75. Crew deck vents
76. Hinged jackstaff
77. Main anchor, (port and) starboard

their hundreds – corvettes play vital Atlantic role

eguard our Shipping

to the ‘wizard war’ – the war of the boffins who ensured that by May 1943, the Allies had an unassailable technological lead over the Germans.

To locate a submerged U-boat, sailors relied on ASDIC (Anti-Submarine Division supersonics) – although the Admiralty claimed it stood for the mythical Allied Submarine Detection Investigation Committee).

From a dome mounted on a ship's hull, ASDIC – today we know it as sonar (SOund Navigation And Ranging) – sent a sound wave through the water, the ‘ping’ which has been the mainstay of every U-boat movie for the past 70 years; if a U-boat was there, an echo would bounce back – allowing the operator to gauge the target's range, bearing and, from 1943, its depth. Its range was limited – perhaps 1,300 yards to a depth of no more than 780ft.

It was also a far from fallible piece of equipment. It was useless if a U-boat was surfaced and in the final moments of an attack, ASDIC lost contact with a submarine lying deep as far away as 750 yards, or for boats in relatively shallow water, at a range of about 150 yards. Wrecks, decoys fired by U-boats, shoals of fish, and different water temperatures could all rebound the sound signals sent out by ASDIC.

With all its blind spots and shortcomings, the success of ASDIC depended on its operator. Technology could only go so far. It was a difficult system to operate – and one mastered only with patience and experience.

To trap a surfaced boat, convoy escorts turned to ‘huff duff’ – High Frequency Direction Finding, using a submarine's radio transmissions to track down its location – or Radio Direction Finding. Today, like ASDIC, we know it better by its American acronym: RADio Direction And Ranging – radar. It did on the surface what ASDIC did below, except that the ping was inaudible; a crew had no idea their U-boat was being tracked by escort vessels at ranges up to three miles.

Having located a foe, it was time to attack. On the surface, ramming was the preferred choice. For a submerged boat, the hunters relied on the depth

charge.

Each charge weighed a quarter of a ton, carrying 290lb of Torpex high explosive. They could be simply rolled off the back of a ship on rails, or could be fired by special throwers, hurling clusters of five charges in a cross-shape, 40ft apart.

It would take little over half a minute for the devices to reach the maximum depth U-boats were thought to operate at – 500ft (in fact they could safely go as deep as 750ft).

Hydrostatic pistols, set by the ship's company to detonate at anything from 50ft to 500ft would trigger the charge. One exploding within 20ft of a U-boat would kill it, one within 100ft would shake the submarine from bow to stern.

LS Cyril Stephens remembers HMS Orchis “lifted up in the air and dropped down again” by the force of a charge exploding at 50ft. “A colossal volume of water would come up and, as the depth charges were deeper, it was almost like lightning going across the water. In the daytime, it's a fantastic thing to see.”

Fantastic – but actually not that deadly. At best one in 13 depth charge attacks resulted in a kill.

For a much better ‘kill ratio’ you have to turn to the Hedgehog – a multiple mortar launcher which propelled up to 24 small mortar bombs into the water – which was introduced in the middle of the war.

Each hedgehog bomb contained less than a quarter of the explosive charge of a depth charge – but it proved to be a much more efficient and effective U-boat killer.

It only exploded on contact with its prey – crew did not need to know the depth of a German submarine, only its position. One in four Hedgehog attacks resulted in success.

Success – if a U-boat was submerged – was the sight of the sea “spouting and boiling”, Nicholas Monsarrat wrote, before it spewed up “what we were waiting for: oil in a spreading stain, bits of wreckage, woodwork, clothing, scraps of humanity.”

It was, Monsarrat observed, “a dog's death – but how triumphant we felt.”

A terrible toll

But for every triumph in the Atlantic, there was a tragedy, especially among the merchantmen.

Merchant Navy losses in WW2 are staggering: around 30,000 men were lost in the Battle of the Atlantic – roughly one in every six sailors under the ‘Red Duster’ became a casualty (there's no comparable figure for Royal Navy losses – but over the war in all theatres, the Senior Service suffered over 50,000 dead, or one in every 15 sailors and Royal Marines).

The Flower men felt the loss of each steamer, each freighter, deeply.

“There's nothing more sorrowful or harrowing than to see a ship and to hear it sink,” says Dick Dykes.

There are noises that come from a ship as if it's screaming as it sinks. Most of that noise is the cargo inside, the boilers, the engine, all moving from one end of the ship to the other. You see the aircraft, tanks and lorries on the upper deck sliding off into the sea amongst the survivors as it sinks.

In my imagination, I can see what it must be like inside. They wouldn't stand a chance.

One phrase crops up repeatedly in interviews Flower-class veterans gave to the Royal Naval Museum in the early 1990s when referring to the ‘flocks’ they shepherded: sitting ducks.

The merchant crews were well aware of the risks they faced; they carried lifejackets and ‘panic bags’ – containing rations, a sweater, personal papers, wallet, perhaps a photograph of loved ones – with them at all times, so they could abandon ship in an instant.

So much for theory. Below decks there would be little chance of escape – particularly in the tankers. For those who did make it into the water or life rafts, rescue was never a foregone conclusion. The Atlantic is rarely benign and never warm – particularly in the northern latitudes the convoys used. Throw oil, debris, wounds and injuries, nerves, exhaustion into the equation, and chances of survival

lessen.

Nor were the escorts guaranteed to stop – the convoy must get through, that was their first duty. A U-boat would show no mercy to any vessel stopping to collect survivors; the Royal Navy had learned that bitter lesson in 1914.

Lt Robert Atkinson, HMS Pink's Commanding Officer, described the terrible dilemma he faced: “One had to make choices – you sometimes saw two or three men swimming.

“You would say ‘go for them’ and ‘leave him’, because he was on his own. That meant he would drown. You'd hear him calling, but you couldn't pick him up.”

William Hallam of HMS Campanula remembered the Atlantic peppered with the flashing automatic red lights of life jackets after one particularly brutal night of convoy action.

“There were little lights – and voices calling out: Here I am. Here I am,” he recalled. “You see 'em dotted all over the place, but you couldn't do anything about it.”

Ill-starred Picotee

If there were any flashing lights from the crew of the Picotee, no-one saw them.

Built by the world-famous Harland & Wolff yard in Belfast in five and a half months and commissioned on September 5 1940, she never made it to her first birthday.

Escorting Convoy ONS4 on the night of August 11-12 1941, a single torpedo from U558 struck Picotee somewhere below her bridge. It tore the ship apart instantly. A few flashes of fire and palls of smoke briefly hid the corvette from view of passing merchant ships. When the fug cleared, all that was left was her bow protruding from the Atlantic at 45°. As she disappeared beneath the waves, some 70 miles south of Iceland, her depth charges exploded.

In the confusion of battle, it was four days before the convoy realised Picotee was gone. A search found only an empty life raft and dinghy – and not necessarily from the corvette. All 66 men aboard were lost.

DEATH OF THE DARKDALE

The Battle of the Atlantic was not merely a struggle to keep the sea lanes from the New World to Old open for six years.

It was a battle waged from the first day of World War 2 to the last on all the maritime highways of the British Empire.

It was waged in the River Plate. Off the Cape of Good Hope and off Madagascar and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean.

It was waged by U-boats, by pocket battleships such as the Graf Spee – hunted down and crippled off Montevideo – or Admiral Scheer; by the pride of Hitler's Navy Bismarck; and by 'surface raiders': small armed ships disguised as harmless merchantmen.

On September 10 1941, submarine U68 sailed from Lorient in France with orders to strike at British shipping in the South Atlantic and converge with a small 'wolf pack' of three U-boats off Cape Town – and once there, raise hell.

But other than dispatching the SS Silverbelle, bound for Liverpool from Durban with 6,000 tons of phosphate and other supplies aboard, the first six weeks of patrol had been barren for Korvettenkapitän Karl-Friedrich Merten.

On the night of October 21-22 1941 he found a prize whose destruction would deal a major blow to Royal Navy operations in the South Atlantic.

The tiny island of St Helena – the nearest land is 1,200 miles away – served as an important staging post in the war against the U-boat.

In the summer of 1941, the tanker RFA Darkdale had arrived off the island, providing fuel for passing Royal Navy warships such as carrier HMS Eagle and cruiser HMS Dorsetshire.

She was still there this October night, anchored off the island's capital Jamestown – evidently unprotected. Merten describes his attack:

"Never again would I have such a favourable opportunity. I fired all four 'eels' [U-boat slang for torpedoes] behind each other; one at the fore mast, one amidships, one aft, and one more at amidships.

At the moment I fired, a man ran from the bridge – which was amidships – to the stern and, waving a lantern, cried out: 'Submarine' – so loudly that we could hear him. But then, just seconds apart, the explosions tore the silence of night apart before the man with the lantern could reach the aft.

All we could see then were flames, flames and yet more flames burning as high as a house and flaring up repeatedly in the dark night sky: from bow to stern there were flames 20 or 30 metres high – there was nothing to be seen of the ship herself. It was one raging inferno, burning as tall as a house and three times wider than the ship itself had been.

The water burned like lightning and came towards us. Spellbound, we had to come to our senses and get out of there – at full speed...

The entire coast was visible – as bright as day: the harbour, the mountains, the batteries, the barracks – and we ourselves, of course, bathed in this glowing light. Rigid, and also deeply moved, we silently stood on the bridge before this orgy of destruction.

No man could survive that – and they were sailors like us. When nothing happened after a good five minutes steering away, I let the crew come up on deck and see the inferno for themselves. No-one celebrated. Every man stood there shuddering.

After 22 minutes one, then two searchlights flashed up and searched. They glided over us once or twice, to concentrate on the sea of flames beneath them. Not a single shot was fired.

The torch of destruction lit us up until 4am as we made our way to the south at slow speed to conserve fuel. No-one could speak and in the control room there were deep conversations. As the entire crew had taken part in this powerful drama, it was the topic of conversation for weeks on end.

In fact, two men survived the explosion – blown off the upper deck and clear of the wreck. Forty-one men went down with her, however, and the ship herself was torn in two, sinking almost immediately.

The wreck may still hold a significant amount of fuel oil which, if discharged, could have a substantial environmental impact on the island.

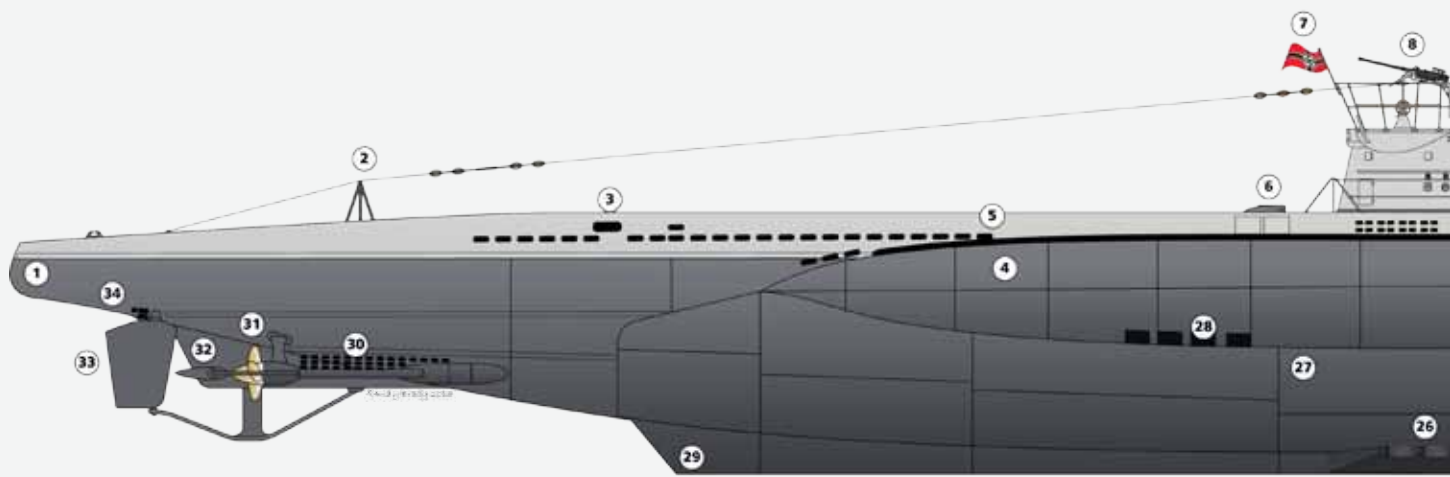
Seventy-one years later, ice patrol ship HMS Protector returned to the spot Darkdale went down in James Bay to survey the wreck using her suite of the latest sonar technology. Accurate positioning of what remains of the tanker will be used for any future monitoring and salvage work that may be required.

As is tradition in the Royal Navy, time was also taken to hold an act of remembrance over the site, after Protector's divers had revisited the wreck to lay a Union Jack on it.

Karl-Friedrich Merten would go on to be Germany's seventh-highest-scoring U-boat ace; more than two dozen ships totalling over 170,000 tons would fall victim to him.

He survived the war and died peacefully in 1993 at the age of 87. His former boat was not so fortunate.

With a different captain at the helm, U68 was sunk off Madeira in April 1944 by American aircraft from the escort carrier USS Guadalcanal (see the main feature, right).



Most numerous submarine ever built threatens B

War of the Grey Wolf

THIS is a Type VIIC boat – here depicted by U552 – the standard warrior in the Battle of the Atlantic; more were built than any other submarine in history: 568 in all.

It was no greyhound of the seas and certainly no leap in technology. A U-bootmann from the first Battle of the Atlantic would recognise much aboard a Type VIIC – its design owed much to a coastal submarine, the UB III, which served with the Kaiser's Navy in the final years of the Great War.

And like its progenitor, the Type VIIC was still less a submarine, more a submersible. It spent most of its time on the surface, diving only to evade the enemy and to keep the crew alert. Only on the surface could the diesel engines run – pushing the boat along at speeds up to 17kts. Dived, the battery-powered electric engine could manage 7kts at best, more typically 4kts – and the cells were typically exhausted after 36 hours.

Such speeds were little improvement on WW1 boats. Nor too had conditions for the U-boat crew improved in the intervening two decades. One word summed up life aboard: cramped. When the boats first set sail every space was filled with food: tinned coffee, tinned meat, tinned fruit, tinned everything; smoked meat and sausages hung overhead.

A solitary cook toiled at a small stove to provide his shipmates with their daily meals. Fresh food did not last long: by the second week of patrol, the bread had been eaten, by the third the meat too.

The smell of his food mixed with diesel oil, grease, sweat and the stench from the boat's toilets. What spaces were not crammed with food were crammed with tools, equipment, escape gear, fuel.

But then hygiene was never a strong point aboard wartime submarines – German or otherwise. There were two heads aboard for a crew of over 50 men – although early in a patrol one served as a makeshift pantry for tinned food. Every three weeks there would be three litres (two-thirds of a gallon) of fresh water to wash with. The rest of the time, crew would brush their teeth and wash using water from the torpedo compensating tanks.

In quiet moments, the U-bootmann played cards with his shipmates: skat, a three-hand trick game was the staple of the German Armed Forces. Until midnight (Berlin time) Goebbels' radio stations broadcast their daily mix of music, light entertainment and propaganda on short wave. And

when the radio reception was poor and the weather wasn't too bad, records proved popular.

As submariners do to this day, most of the crew 'hot bunked' – while one man was on watch, his shipmate slept in his bed which was, wrote Lothar-Günther Buchheim – a 23-year-old war correspondent who joined U96 on patrol in late 1941 – as big as "an average sized coffin". The officers' wardroom doubled as the chief engineer's bed. Only the captain enjoyed his own cabin.

Never dry

It was rarely, if ever, dry aboard. The hatch to the conning tower was left open on the surface – closed only in severe weather. "Inside, the humidity was intolerable. Moisture condensing on the cold steel hull, ran in streaks into the bilges," wrote Oberleutnant Herbert Werner of U557. "Food turned rotten, and had to be thrown overboard. Bread became soggy and mildewy. Paper dissolved. Our clothes were clammy and never dried, and whatever we touched was wet and slimy."

As for those on watch on the bridge, Harald Busch – like Buchheim a Propaganda Kompanie reporter – painted a rather bleak picture:

The splashing water is icy cold. So you'll do well to pull on an oilskin coat over your fur jacket because as the swell worsens the breakers become more frequent, crashing over the men on the bridge. You're wet faster than you're dry again, so it's best to be wrapped up warm and tight if you want to remain alert for your four hours on lookout.

On the surface, the Type VIIC was a poor seakeeper. "The motion of the boat was a perpetual swinging, swaying, rocking, rolling and listing," Herbert Werner remembered.

In particularly heavy weather, a boat would pitch and roll horrendously – listing up to 60° before righting itself violently. "The boat literally climbed the mountainous seas, plunged through the wave crests, hung for a moment with its stem in the empty air and plunged down the other side into the trough of the waves," recalled Peter 'Ali' Cremer, commander of U333. Briefly the propellers hung out of the air before also crashing down. With each crash "U333 shuddered in every frame member like a steel spring." Cremer closed the conning tower hatch to prevent not merely the

TYPE VIIC U552



Patrols	15
Merchantmen sunk	30
Ships damaged.....	3
Tonnage sunk.....	163,756
Auxiliaries sunk.....	1
Warships sunk.....	1

Commanding Officers

Dec 4 1940-Sept 8 1942.....	Korvettenkapitän Erich Topp
Sept 9 1942-July 10 1944.....	Kapitanleutnant Klaus Popp
July 11 1944-May 2 1945.....	Oberleutnant Günther Lube

Facts and Figures

Class: Type VIIC U-boat	Maximum operating depth: 253m (754ft)
Emblem: Two dancing red devils carrying the torches of life and destruction	Crush depth: 250-295m (820-967ft)
Builder: Blohm & Voss, Hamburg	Speed: 17½kts (surfaced)/8kts (submerged)
Laid down: September 25, 1939	Range: 8,190 nautical miles (surfaced)/80 nautical miles (submerged)
Launched: September 14, 1940	Crew: 44-52
Commissioned: December 4, 1940	Propulsion: 2 × supercharged Germaniawerft four-stroke six cylinder diesel engines (surfaced) 2 × AEG electric motors (submerged)
Fate: Scuttled, Wilhelmshaven, May 2 1945	Armament: 14 torpedoes; 1 x 88mm deck gun; 1 x 20mm flak
Displacement: 770 tons (surfaced)/870 tons (submerged)	
Length: 67.1m (220ft)	
Beam: 6.2m (20ft 4in)	
Pressure Hull Beam: 4.7m (15ft 5in)	
Draught: 4.7m (15ft 5in)	

Key

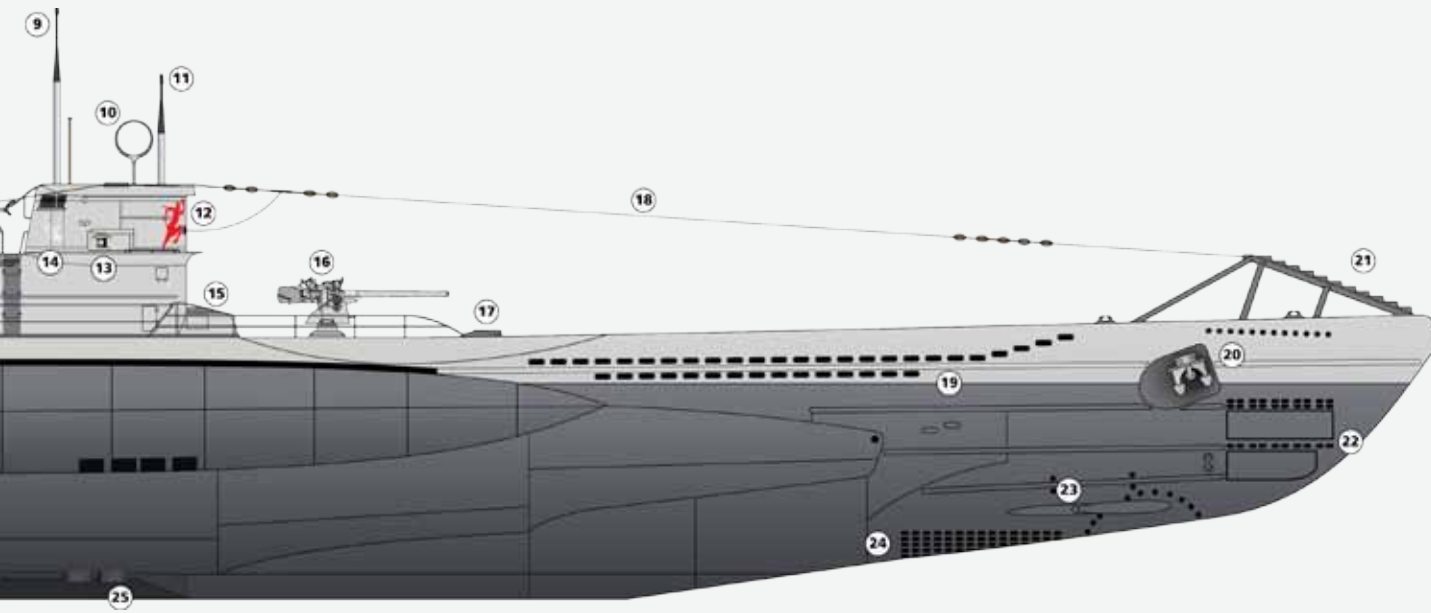
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Stern casing | 17. 88mm ammunition locker |
| 2. Stern navigation light | 18. Radio aerial |
| 3. Diesel engine exhaust | 19. Forward drainage slots |
| 4. Saddle tanks | 20. Anchor |
| 5. Drainage slots | 21. Net cutter |
| 6. 20mm Flak ammunition locker | 22. Forward torpedo tubes |
| 7. Reichskriegsflagge (battle ensign) | 23. Forward hydroplane |
| 8. 20mm Flak gun | 24. Drainage slots |
| 9. Attack periscope | 25. Ballast keel |
| 10. Direction finding aerial | 26. Main diving tank inlet valve |
| 11. Control room periscope | 27. Pressure hull |
| 12. Boat's emblem | 28. Diving tank inlet valve |
| 13. Conning tower navigation light | 29. Keel |
| 14. 7 Flotille emblem | 30. Propeller shaft |
| 15. Magnetic compass housing | 31. Propeller |
| 16. 88mm deck gun | 32. Aft hydroplane |
| | 33. Rudder |
| | 34. Aft torpedo tube |

ingress of water, but to prevent his submarine from being swamped and foundering.

"The inside of the boat was like a dice cup with everything whirling about," Cremer wrote. "Sleeping was hardly possible – one just dozed.

Those lying in hammocks swayed to and fro like washing hung to dry; those in the wire bunks buckled themselves in." Crocker crashed, men on watch stumbled around, grabbing anything they could for support.





Britain's lifelines on the Seven Seas

Lives and Iron Coffins

For sailors on their first trip, stuck in a lolling U-boat, seasick, disorientated, Goebbels' propaganda image of modern-day Vikings going to sea "with their red shield fixed to their mast" was a world away. Harald Busch remembered that recruits

lay withdrawn and wretched on their bunks, longing only to die... The poor lads were gripped by an agony of the soul. If they could get out – simply climb overboard and jump into the sea – instead of being shut in, battered down, in this deafening, reeking tube of steel. If only they had never volunteered. Their thoughts groped out toward home, far away, to their friends.

Fighting spirit

And yet for many men, there was something unique about life in the U-boats; a bond of comradeship, built up unheard of elsewhere in Germany's armed forces. Erich Topp, given command of the new Type VIIC boat U552 at the beginning of 1941, summed up this "special way of life" – a spirit not a million miles away from today's submariners:

Everyone has to know everything on board. Everybody must be able to replace the other. More than that, you have to know not only the activities of your neighbour, but his way of thinking, and his strong and weak points.

When you are leaving harbour, closing the hatch, diving, you and your crew are bidding farewell to a colourful world, to the sun and the stars, the wind and the waves, the smell of the sea. All are living under constant tension, produced by living in a steel tube – a very small, cramped and confined space, with congested compartments, monotony and an unhealthy lifestyle, caused by bad air, the lack of normal rhythms of day and night and the lack of physical exercise.

These conditions can wear down any man quite rapidly, and can only be balanced by discipline for oneself and one's crew, a well organised daily routine, and officers who deal correctly with the individual man and his welfare.

However grim being battered by the North Atlantic was, it was still better than submerging for long

periods, as Wolfgang Hirschfeld, a radio operator in U109, recalled.

The air in the boat was foul and the fug was being circulated from bow to stern by the fans; we all knew the effect that this would be having on us... All off-watch men were confined to bed. There was probably enough oxygen in the boat for 48 hours, but it was doubtful if the batteries could last that long. Once the charge was exhausted, the propellers would no longer revolve and the boat would sink.

Sustained periods dived were invariably the result of sustained enemy activity. In the presence of warships and aircraft, the first thought was to dive – and dive quickly the Type VII could, reaching 150m (500ft).

But dived, and especially with a frigate or corvette circling above, a U-boat was almost defenceless.

Under attack

"There was an abrupt rattle as though someone had tossed a handful of gravel at the hull," wrote Lothar-Günther Buchheim whose U96 dived after sinking the Dutch steamer Bennekom from convoy OS10.

The rattle was the sound of the ASDIC of sloop HMS Lulworth. Depth charges could – and frequently did – kill a U-boat. But the rattle or ping of sonar, reverberating through a boat, could drive men mad.

I wanted to shout "Switch off!" The chirping grated on my nerves. We froze, hardly daring to breathe, although Asdic would find us even if we turned to stone...Nervous tension gripped me. My hands were trembling.

My skull felt as fragile as glass, subjected to the same extreme pressure that weighed on our steel skin. The least touch might be too much. Amplified heartbeats filled my ears. I shook my head, but the pounding did not diminish.

Terror of hysterical intensity seemed to be destroying my capacity for thought. At the same time, it honed my powers of perception to a fine edge. I could see and feel all that went on round me with preternatural distinctness.

As for depth charging – *Wabos* in the parlance of the *U-bootmann*, short for *Wasserbomben* (literally

water bombs) – the experience was "as if a giant fist had pounded the boat from above", Karl-Friedrich Merten remembered.

Merten was learning the ropes of commanding a U-boat from the experienced *Kapitänleutnant* Heinrich Liebe in U38 when the boat was surprised on the surface and dived to avoid an approaching warship.

We shook as if both ends had broken off. The lights went out, of course. The emergency lighting flickered into life in a fraction of a minute. It shed light on chaos in every compartment, particularly the control room which we reached by diving through the bulkhead in the darkness.

After the smoke had thinned out and there was no water evident in the control room, Liebe reacted to this totally unexpected event with a violent change of course and increase of speed.

No more depth charges were dropped after we quickly doubled our depth and slunk off at a reduced speed. Repeated 'all clear' reports came from every compartment. The lights went on again but there was a faint smell of chlorine for'ard. In the battery check which was immediately carried out; six wrecked battery cells were quickly identified – they had to be bypassed immediately. Then clearing out the forward battery bilge began and the boat was quickly spared the danger of chlorine gas. The depth charge had evidently exploded very much close to our port side, roughly level with the control room – and probably set for a depth of about 50 metres.

U68 survived. Just. "In my opinion we'd been a whisker from destruction," Merten observed.

His boat's luck ran out – with a different captain at the helm, *Oberleutnant* Albert Lauzemis – in April 1944. She was caught on the surface some 70 miles off the coast of Madeira by aircraft from the USS Guadalcanal. The boat's crew threw up a wall of flak, but the American bombers persisted with their attack, throwing first rockets then, as U68 dived, depth charges at her.

"There followed a terrific underwater explosion, with large air bubbles, debris, oil, battery acid, torpedo air flasks and several survivors coming to the surface and again a large glowing light

underwater," an official report of the attack states.

The "several survivors" sighted by the American airmen turned out to be two crewmen left above deck when U68 dived – the conning hatch had been closed before they could scramble below.

They spent three hours floating in the debris of their submarine – oil, cork, cloth, food, a canvas bag, a sofa pillow, a leather jacket, and the mangled remains of their shipmates – before they were picked out of the Atlantic.

In that time, one man had died, leaving 19-year-old *Matrosengefreiter* (able seaman) Hans Kastrup as the sole survivor from a crew of 57.

Kastrup's fate was atypical – two thirds of all U-boats destroyed sank with all hands.

U68's fate, however, was not atypical. It was one of 249 U-boats sunk in 1944 – six more than in 1943 when the Battle of the Atlantic was declared as won. In a little over four months of 1945, a further 120 submarines were sunk – a rate of killing unsurpassed.

Over the course of the war, the prospects facing a *U-bootmann* were bleak. More than 30,000 were killed – roughly two-thirds of all those who went to sea between 1939 and 1945.

Some 757 U-boats were destroyed, 648 on operational missions. One in three was sunk on its first patrol, while in the final two years of the war the rate of killing was so high that one in every two U-boats failed to return to base.

No wonder, then, that Herbert Werner, who settled in the USA after the war, titled his memoirs *Die eisernen Särge* – Iron Coffins.

In those final 12 months of its existence – when Werner commanded two boats – the U-boat arm "accomplished little but self-destruction," he lamented 25 years later.

Werner knew the statistics and knew the fate of his comrades – one by one they sailed "on ludicrous missions that ended in death". Yet when the order came from the German Navy's commander, Karl Dönitz, to cease hostilities in May 1945 he had to fight back the tears "for I had never been taught to lose".

The reality of peace soon sunk in, however. "An unknown tranquility took possession of me as I realised fully that I had survived. My death in an iron coffin – a verdict of long standing – was finally suspended. The truth was so beautiful that it seemed to be a dream."

TOP SECRET SUB SIGNALS CRACKED

Thanks to our boffins at Bletchley Park, we're able to read some of the Germans' most important radio traffic.

Despite being encoded into a billion different combinations by an innocuous-looking portable type-writer, known as an Enigma machine, many of these signals can be read by our top team of scientists.

Some of these cracked signals – codenamed Ultra – show just how desperate the U-boat force is becoming.

2258 HOURS, MAY 18TH 1943

FROM: DÖNITZ
TO: ALL U-BOAT COMMANDING OFFICERS

IN HIS EFFORTS TO TAKE THE U-BOAT'S MOST IMPORTANT ASSET - INVISIBILITY - FROM IT, THE ENEMY IS ONCE AGAIN SOME LENGTHS AHEAD OF US WITH HIS RADIO DIRECTION FINDING.

I AM FULLY AWARE OF HOW DIFFICULT THIS MAKES YOUR POSITION IN COMBATING THE ENEMY'S ESCORTS AND DEFENCES. REST ASSURED THAT AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF I AM EXERTING ALL MY POWERS AND AM TAKING - AND HAVE TAKEN - ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO ALTER THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS.

RESEARCH AND TESTING STATIONS BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE NAVY ARE WORKING TO IMPROVE YOUR EQUIPMENT...

ON YOUR PART I EXPECT YOU TO MAINTAIN RESOLUTE OPPOSITION, TO MATCH YOUR INVENTIVENESS, ABILITY AND WILL AGAINST THE ENEMY'S RUSES AND TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS AND SO GET EVEN WITH HIM.

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ATLANTIC COMMANDING OFFICERS HAVE REPORTED THAT EVEN TODAY THE ENEMY HAS WEAK SPOTS EVERYWHERE.

AND IF A MAN MAKES UP HIS MIND WILLY-NILLY TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING, THE ENEMY'S EQUIPMENT IS IN MANY CASES NOT AS EFFECTIVE AS IT FIRST APPEARS.

I TRUST THAT I SHALL SHORTLY BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU BETTER EQUIPMENT FOR THIS BITTER STRUGGLE OF YOURS.

1824 HOURS, MAY 21ST 1943

FROM: COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, U-BOATS
TO: MOSEL GROUP

IN THE CASE OF THE LAST TWO CONVOYS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC, WE ACHIEVED NOTHING. THE FULL MOON PLAYED A LARGE PART ON THE SECOND OCCASION.

WHOEVER BELIEVES THAT OFFENSIVE ACTION AGAINST CONVOYS IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE IS A WREAKING AND NOT A TRUE U-BOAT COMMANDER.

THE BATTLE IN THE ATLANTIC IS BECOMING HARDER, BUT IT IS THE DECISIVE POINT IN THIS WAR. BE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR GREAT RESPONSIBILITY AND BE QUITE CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR YOUR DEEDS.

DO YOUR BEST AGAINST THE PRESENT CONVOY. WE MUST DESTROY IT. IF CONDITIONS ARE FAVOURABLE DO NOT DIVE FOR AIRCRAFT, BUT OPEN FIRE AND FIGHT THEM OFF. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE MOVE AWAY FROM DESTROYERS ON THE SURFACE.

BE HARD, GET AHEAD AND ATTACK. I BELIEVE IN YOU.

1657 HOURS, MAY 23RD 1943

FROM: COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, U-BOATS
TO: ALL U-BOATS

A WORD OF ADMONISHMENT TO ALL U-BOAT COMMANDERS:

1. OUR HEAVY U-BOAT LOSSES IN THE PAST MONTH ARE PRIMARILY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE PRESENT SUPERIORITY OF THE ENEMY'S LOCATION DEVICES AND THE SURPRISE FROM THE AIR WHICH THESE HAVE MADE POSSIBLE. MORE THAN HALF OUR TOTAL LOSSES HAVE RESULTED FROM THIS SURPRISE ON BOTH OUTWARD AND RETURN PASSAGE AS WELL AS IN ATTACKING FORMATIONS IN THE OPERATIONAL AREA. LOSSES IN ACTUAL COMBAT WITH CONVOYS HAVE, BY COMPARISON, BEEN SMALL, EXCEPT IN ONE CASE WHERE PARTICULARLY UNFAVOURABLE CONDITIONS PREVAILLED, AND EVEN SOME OF THESE LOSSES WERE CAUSED BY AIR[CRAFT].

2. THE PRESENT SITUATION IN RELATION TO ENEMY AIR AND ENEMY LOCATION MUST BE TIDED OVER BY SPECIAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES BOTH ON PASSAGE AND IN WAITING POSITIONS, TAKING OTHER DISADVANTAGES INTO ACCOUNT. ORDERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THIS END, AND I SHALL BE DRAWING MY OWN FURTHER CONCLUSIONS IN THE CHOICE OF ATTACKING AREAS.

3. ALL MY EFFORTS ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS IMPROVING OUR POSITION, COUNTER-MEASURES AGAINST THE ENEMY'S LOCATION [DEVICES] AND OUR FLAK ARMAMENT. THE MAXIMUM EFFORT IS BEING MADE BY EVERYONE TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM. PRACTICAL RESULTS WILL REACH THE FRONT IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME. THE TIME UNTIL THEN MUST BE BRIDGED OVER WITH RESOURCE AND CAUTION BOTH ON PASSAGE AND WHILE WAITING, AND WITH ALL YOUR OLD INEXORABLE RIGOUR WHEN IN COMBAT.





STANDING on the compass platform of his ship, a Royal Navy commander scans the horizon with his Barr & Stroud binoculars (price around £40 – over £1,750 in today's money) with a scarf and duffel coat to protect him from the elements.

Although a sailor's uniform was firmly laid down in pre-war dress regulations, the exigencies of the Battle of the Atlantic meant a rather more practical approach to clothing – rarely will you find a photograph of men on convoy duties dressed alike.

Men wore "whatever you could lay your hands on," sick berth attendant Howard Goldsmith recalled: woollen long johns which itched, thick stockings, sea boots, grey flannel trousers, sweater or jersey.

Those working outside on the upper decks, fully exposed to the elements, wore oilskin coats, while officers typically donned a duffel coat – sometimes beige, sometimes dark blue. Both wore scarves or towels around their necks to prevent water streaming down their backs. It rarely worked – and worse, a scarf could chafe the skin if salt crystals from the incessant spray and waves built up.

The coats were not issued to each individual sailor – a ship was provided with sufficient 'loan clothing' for half the complement; they would wear it on watch, handing the coats over to their shipmates when going off duty.

With the constant threat of enemy action, men rarely removed their clothes beyond their boots off duty. If there was time to strip and even wash, stokers in the engine room might offer to dry clothes – which would be returned with the smell of oil and fuel.

With little fresh water, sailors often washed in sea water. Few ships had showers – the best the men could do was fill a bucket and tip it over them; most had tin baths, but little opportunity on patrol to use them.

Men on watch on the bridge were as exposed to the fury of the Atlantic as though toiling on the depth charge launchers or Hedgehog.

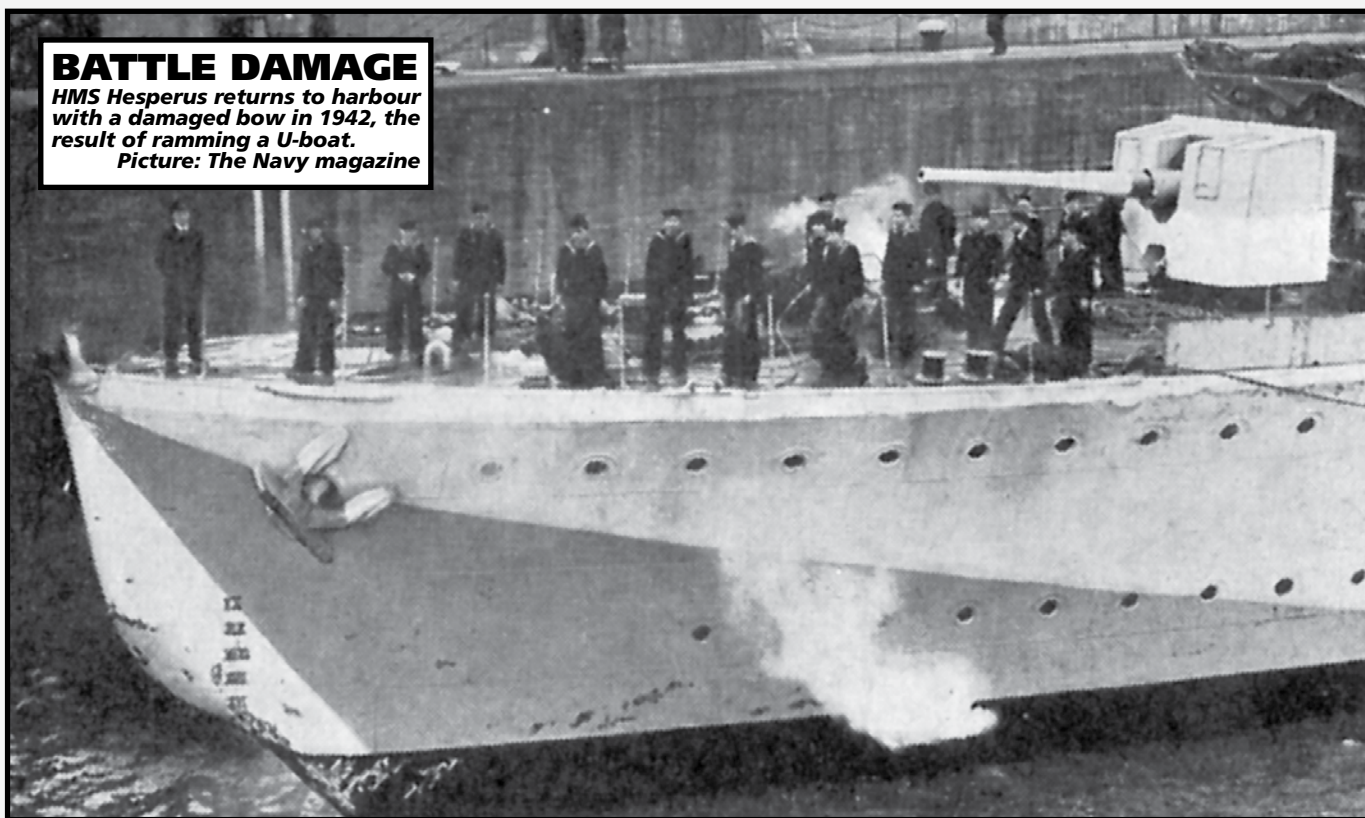
Unlike larger Royal Navy warships, escorts were built with open bridges – officially compass platforms – with an armoured wheelhouse and coxswain beneath it. Voice pipes served as a major means of communication with the rest of the ship.

Although an open bridge was cold, exhausting and invariably wet, it did offer sailors an unparalleled view, regarded as particularly important in convoy escort. Indeed, it was well into the 1950s before the open bridges were finally phased out – a move designed not merely to spare sailors the ravages of the weather, but also to shield them from chemical, biological and nuclear threats in the event of a full-scale war.

BATTLE DAMAGE

HMS Hesperus returns to harbour with a damaged bow in 1942, the result of ramming a U-boat.

Picture: The Navy magazine



U-boats not the only threat in stormy Atlantic

An implacable foe

THIS is the first-hand story of a British destroyer, engaged in escorting a homeward-bound convoy, which hoisted sail to assist herself home after being damaged in an Atlantic gale.

After a sunny day, the weather became threatening, and it blew harder and harder until, toward evening, the convoy was obliged to heave-to.

Here is an eyewitness account from *The Navy* of April 1942:

"Early in the first watch such a terrific sea was running that the destroyer's look-outs were taken off their normal stations and ordered to shelter in the forward galley.

"Big seas were breaking over the pom-pom platform amidships, as well as over the high angle gun further aft.

"Right aft a hatch was forced open, and as no one could venture on to the upper deck, the compartment below, known as the tiller flat, was filled with water.

"Drums of oil, ropes and cables were washing about, and soon fouled the steering gear, so that the ship would no longer answer to her helm.

"Using the engines to steer her, the captain turned the ship's head into the wind, but with the buffeting of the heavy seas that swept from stem to stern, defects developed in both engine and boiler rooms.

"The glass of the wheelhouse was smashed, and a big wave deeply indented the steel wing of the bridge, injuring the look-out there.

"In the forward galley the water was flooding in as fast as we could push it out with long-handled brooms. Throughout the first and middle watches it continued to blow with full gale force, and we could do nothing but run before it.

"On the mess decks the watch below were all in their hammocks, doing their best to sleep. No one was worrying, for such gales are all too frequent in an Atlantic winter.

"Towards daybreak the wind subsided, and we were able to get on deck and survey the damage.

"The whaler had been stoved in, and the guard rail around the pom-pom platform was badly buckled.

"The hands of the duty watch were kept busy straightening the twisted parts, bailing out the tiller flat and restowing the scattered stores.

"As the steering gear was still out of action, the captain steered the ship as well as he could with the damaged engines.

"To keep the destroyer on a straight course, headsails were rigged.

"These sails were made up of the set belonging to the ship's whaler, together with a lugsail taken from a merchant vessel's lifeboat which had been found adrift the previous day.

"Though an armed tug offered to tow us into port, her assistance was declined, and the captain brought the destroyer in under her own power."

Such a tale might seem to be extreme, but then the weather in the

WAVE CREST

HMS Maggie on convoy duties.

Picture: The Navy



crucial months of the Battle of the Atlantic was extreme.

The early part of the war featured three brutal winters in a row for the UK; 1939-40, 1940-41 and 1941-42 were notable as being particularly cold, but if things were bad on the streets of Britain, what were they like for sailors on the high seas?

The Navy, the paper of the Navy League, gives an insight into the other battle faced by those manning merchantmen and their escorts – the enemy in this case being the elements.

In an article by H. C. Ferraby, the correspondent notes that those at home complaining about the weather "had at least solid unmoving pavements beneath their feet, bedrooms that were not swirling three feet deep in sea water and with jobs of work that were mostly done in centrally-heated offices, sheltered from the fury of wind and the stinging of sleet."

Gale conditions

He reports that "meteorological records and the reports of senior naval officers and convoy commodores all show that from September to March this winter there was hardly once a 48 hour lull in the gale conditions."

Reports frequently referred to hurricane-force gusts of wind – that is in excess of 75mph – and the normal bill of fare appeared to be Force 9, strong gales of 50mph, blowing for days on end.

In the six months from September 1941 the correspondent had seen no reports of a single warship being lost

to the stresses of wind and waves – though there had been lives lost as men were swept or thrown overboard and equipment was damaged.

This, he believed, was testament to the skill of naval architects, despite the fact that they never thought their designs would be tested so severely.

A number of illustrations give landlubbers an insight into the cold, wet, noisy, chaotic world of the little Atlantic escort ships.

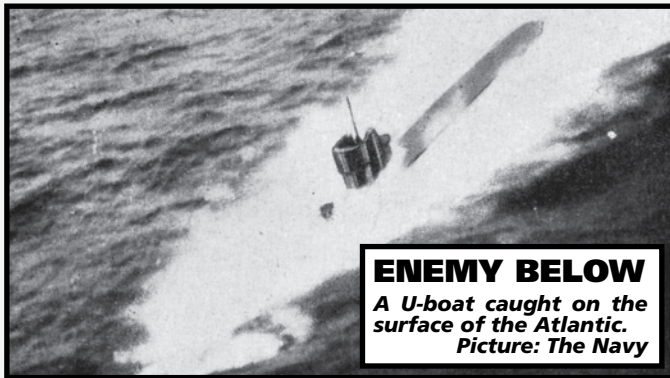
The Arctic conditions in Britain led to one captain complaining that "he woke up one morning in port to find icicles hanging over his head from the roof of his cabin.

"What had happened was that the electric heating of the ship had gone off during the night and that water from the deck above had seeped through deck seams which had opened under the stresses and strains that the ship had undergone at sea in the preceding weeks."

Atlantic rollers of 20-35ft, driven by a gale, could cause immense trouble to a small warship, even when it was steaming slowly – damaged superstructures and the loss of boats were commonplace.

One destroyer was reported to have rolled to an angle of 70 degrees and hung there for half a minute before recovering – the men of that ship said that the port side of the bridge, normally many feet above the water line, was submerged.

"A seaman of that ship, describing afterwards what happened, said: 'I was standing in the wheelhouse, and through the open doors I could see the sea sweeping over the signal platform.



ENEMY BELOW

A U-boat caught on the surface of the Atlantic.

Picture: The Navy

Yankee hospitality

HOSPITALITY shown towards British sailors by Americans during the war could be beyond the wildest dreams of those back in Blighty.

In issue 6 of *Corvette Cracker*, the magazine of the Flower Class Corvette Association, Ron Challoner, of HMS Pimpernel, tells of the influence of Mrs Mary Starr in the Connecticut town of Essex.

Mrs Starr – widely known as Cdr Starr, whose home in Novelty Lane was dubbed HMS Connecticut – flew the White Ensign from a flagstaff and, through the Union Jack Club in New York, arranged for RN sailors to be billeted with wealthy American families in Connecticut, said Ron.

"My oppo Norman Hildy and I spent our leave at the home of Mr and Mrs Chester and Dorothy Bowles.

"Chester at the time had just taken on the job of food rationing for Connecticut and later became Minister of Food for America.

"Later he became Governor of Connecticut and then Ambassador to India. This is the type of people Mary Starr placed her lads with.

"An incident which I have often looked back on with glee was when Chester and Dorothy were invited to dinner where the principal guest was a retired British admiral who was a commodore in charge of convoys.

"Chester took us along and said his guests were as important to him as any admiral.

"The admiral was a bit starchy at having to consort with two able seamen. However, after a good dinner and some excellent whisky he mellowed a bit."

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www.royalnavy.mod.uk/boa

